



**P5 STATE**

## POLL EXPENDITURE OF CANDIDATES RAISED TO RS 95L IN J&K, RS 75L IN LADAKH

The Government of India has increased the election expenditure of candidates for Lok Sabha polls in Jammu & Kashmir to Rs 95 lakh and in Ladakh to Rs 75 lakh.

**P6**

## VACCINATING THE YOUNG: HAS INDIA LEFT IT TOO LATE?

Finally, 15-18 age group in India is lining up for COVID-19 vaccination and it is not a day too soon. Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal who attended a political rally recently has tested positive, the unfathomable night curfews...



**P11 SPORTS**

## DJOKOVIC IN LIMBO AS HE FIGHTS DEPORTATION FROM AUSTRALIA

Locked in a dispute over his COVID-19 vaccination status, Novak Djokovic was confined to an immigration detention hotel in Australia on



**Quote!**

Nothing ever goes away until it teaches us what we need to know

Pema Chodron

## NEWS DIGEST

### Soldier Found Dead With Bullet Injury

**POONCH:** An Army man on Thursday was found dead with a bullet injury under mysterious circumstances along Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district, sources said. The soldier identified as Anil Chouhan of Uttarakhand from army's 8 Garhwal Regiment was found dead in Balnoi forward area and investigation has **More on P10**

### Guard Foils Attempt To Loot ATM

**SRINAGAR:** Jammu and Kashmir bank ATM guard was injured when burglars made an attempt to loot an ATM at Nasrullahpora in central Kashmir Budgam district on Thursday evening, officials said. A police official said that the attempted theft came to light when an ATM guard reported **More on P10**

### 4 Persons Held For 'Killing' Peacock

**SRINAGAR:** Four persons were arrested for alleged killing of a peacock - National Bird - in Sumah Akhnoor in Jammu, officials said on Thursday evening. They said that four persons namely Ishiyaq Ahmed son of Mohd Aslam, Safdar Hussain son of Mohd Ayub, Mohd Farooq son of **More on P10**

### Gas Gun Recovered In Budgam

**SRINAGAR:** A gas gun was found by a police party in Gagoo Humhama in central Kashmir's Budgam district, officials said. A senior police officer told a local news gathering agency GNS that a police party found one black color leather bag containing one Gas Gun bearing **More on P10**

# Dubai's DP World To Build Dry Port In J&K



J&K LG Manoj Sinha interacting with the Chairman of DP World, Sultan Ahmed bin Sulayem and his team in Dubai on Thursday.

## Agencies

**SRINAGAR:** Dubai ports giant DP World is set to build an inland port in Jammu and Kashmir as part of plans by the emirate to invest in Jammu and Kashmir. Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha said on Thursday. The Centre last year said Dubai, part of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), would invest

in infrastructure and other projects in the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir.

Sinha, who is in Dubai this week to promote investment, said DP World would soon visit the 250 acre site earmarked for the inland port facility.

"We will finalise it shortly," he told Reuters news agency, describing the project as a "firm **More on P10**

## LG Talks Business With DP World Chief

**DUBAI:** The Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha discussed business opportunities and potential areas of collaboration between the Union Territory government and UAE based DP World, here on Thursday.

According to an official spokesperson, Sinha met the Chairman of DP World, Sultan Ahmed bin Sulayem here to discuss the opportunities and potential areas of collaboration between the Government of Jammu & Kashmir and DP World, a Dubai-based company specialising in **More on P10**

## Lulu Group To Set Up Food Processing Hub

**UAE-based retail major Lulu group on Thursday said it will invest Rs 200 crore in Jammu & Kashmir to set up a food processing and logistic hub. The Lulu group signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the J&K government in**

this regard, the company said in a statement. The company will invest Rs 200 crore in the first phase. The announcement was made by Lulu Group Chairman Yusuff Ali M A in the presence of J&K Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha **More on P10**

# Former J&K CM's To Lose SSG Security Cover

## Press Trust Of India

**SRINAGAR:** Four former chief ministers of Jammu and Kashmir, including Farooq Abdullah and Ghulam Nabi Azad, are likely to lose their Special Security Group (SSG) protection as the union territory's administration has decided to wind up the elite unit established in 2000, officials said on Thursday.

The move comes a little over 19 months after the Centre had issued a gazette notification -- Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Adaptation of State Laws) Order, 2020 -- on March 31, 2020, amending the Special Security Group Act of the erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir government by

omitting a clause that provided former chief ministers and their families with SSG security.

Officials said the decision was taken by the Security Review Coordination Committee, a group that oversees the threat perception of important leaders in Jammu and Kashmir.

The officials said the SSG will be "right-sized" by reducing the number of the elite force to the "bare minimum". It will be headed by an officer below the rank of Superintendent of Police as against Director, who is of the rank of Inspector General of Police and above.

However, the officials feel there was a **More on P10**

# Omicron Surge: Centre Asks J&K To Step Up Testing



File Photo: Abid Bhat

## Press Trust Of India

**NEW DELHI:** Underlining the highly transmissible nature of Omicron and the preponderance of asymptomatic cases, the Centre has urged nine states

and union territories including Jammu and Kashmir to ramp up COVID-19 testing to ensure that infected people do not spread the virus to others.

In a letter to Tamil Nadu, Punjab, Odisha, **More on P10**

# Met Predicts 2-Days of Heavy Snowfall

## Press Trust Of India

**SRINAGAR:** The minimum temperature in most places of Kashmir stayed close to the freezing point as the residents continue to experience warmer than expected nights, officials said here on Thursday.

Srinagar recorded the minimum temperature of 0.3 degree Celsius, marginally down from the previous night's 0.8 degrees Celsius, the officials said.

Gulmarg, the famous skiing resort in north Kashmir, recorded a low of minus 3.5 degrees Celsius -- up from previous night's 4.0 degrees Celsius. The officials said

Pahalgam, which serves as the base camp for the annual Amarnath yatra, recorded a low of minus 0.8 degrees Celsius slightly down from minus 0.4 degrees Celsius the previous night.

They said Qazigund recorded the minimum of 0.4 degrees Celsius, while the nearby south town of Kokernag recorded a low of minus 0.7 degrees Celsius.

The mercury in Kupwara in north Kashmir settled at a low of 0.0 degrees Celsius, same as previous night.

The Met Office has forecast widespread **More on P10**

## Flights Resume At Srinagar Airport

**F**light operations resumed at the Srinagar airport on Thursday after remaining adversely affected due to snowfall, officials said here. Some of the early morning flights were delayed due to poor visibility, an Airports Authority of India official told PTI. Flight operations to and from the airport have, however, resumed, he said. Snowfall and low visibility across Kashmir forced cancellation of 37 of the 42 scheduled flights on Wednesday while the air traffic to and from the Srinagar airport was severely affected on Tuesday, too.

## Banihal Highway Reopens For Traffic

**J**ammu-Srinagar highway, the only surface link connecting Kashmir valley with the outside world, reopened for traffic on Thursday, officials said. The vehicular movement of the highway was suspended yesterday after incessant rains and snowfall triggered **More on P10**

## JCB Ferries Pregnant Woman To Hospital

## Agencies

**SRINAGAR:** Amid massive snowfall and snow accumulation, a woman writhing with labour pain was shifted to hospital in a JCB in Kapran area of Verinag in Anantnag district.

A woman from Trajan village in Verinag hamlet developed labour pain in the dead of night and her family members were finding it very difficult to take her to nearby hospital due to accumulation of snow and continuous snowfall in the area.

Officials said that the distressed family contacted PMGSY officials and contractor of the road leading to the area namely Javid Ahmad.

They said that first they offered them the **More on P10**

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# Hot Snow- Eastern Ladakh Heats Up As China Latches Fresh Psy-ops

## KO Web Desk

**New Delhi:** Days after a propaganda video emerged showing Chinese troops celebrating New Year in what they called Galwan Valley, satellite imagery now shows a new bridge being built by the Chinese to link both banks of Pangong Lake, another flashpoint in eastern Ladakh.

Interestingly Galwan propaganda video circulated by official Chinese media was in contrast to Indian media's reports on January 1 of troops of the two countries exchanging sweets and greetings on New Year at several locations along the Line of Actual Control (LAC). The latest satellite images



File Photo: Abid Bhat

suggest China building a bridge to connect the north and south banks of the Pangong Tso lake in eastern Ladakh for the faster movement of its troops in the sector.

The banks of Pangong Tso besides Galwan valley were the

most tense standoff point between the Indian and Chinese armies in Ladakh for nine months in 2020. The sector had seen hand-to-hand clashes between the troops from the two sides and had also seen the **More on P10**

## Rajnath Warns Pak To Desist From Its J&K Design

## Press Trust Of India

**D**efence Minister Rajnath Singh Thursday said Pakistan will have to desist from its "mischievous activities" in Jammu and Kashmir. India wants good relations with all countries especially with its neighbours because friends can be changed not neighbours, Singh said. "But Pakistan does not understand this and continues with its design in Jammu and Kashmir." "Atalji went to Pakistan because he wanted good ties **More on P10**

## Snow, Selfie, Smile

# Festive Footfall in Kashmir's Winter Wonderland

## Syed Burhan

**SRINAGAR:** Visuals coming from Kashmir's famed ski-resort Gulmarg is making the snow-carpeted meadow a must-visit destination, at least for who's who in town.

Following the recent snowfall, the winter destination in north Kashmir is bustling with visitors thronging the famed tourist destination in large numbers.

Among the eager faces are some popular figures who have made it to Gulmarg and have shared their pictures on social media platforms.

National Conference vice



president and former chief minister Omar Abdullah is one among them.

Several Kashmir based social media handles shared images of Omar flaunting **More on P10**



## You Could Soon Change Your Car Colour With The Touch Of A Button

BMW Group wants to let you change the color of your car with the touch of a button. On Jan. 5, it debuted a concept vehicle called the BMW iX Flow, which uses electrophoretic technology to change colors from black to white or combine black and white in a kaleidoscope of graphics across the surface of its body. The iX Flow is based on the electric iX SUV that BMW debuted in 2021.

"The car dresses you, it expresses you not just from the inside but from the outside we have tried to create a technology and adapted it to the car that allows you to do that," Christoph Grote, senior vice president of electronics at BMW Group, said during a roundtable interview during the launch. He also noted that being able to change a vehicle from dark to light while driving under hot temperatures would help with efficiency and thermal regulation inside the vehicle. BMW worked with a company called E-Ink to develop the application for vehicles. Founded in 1997, E-Ink developed the technology used in Kindle readers and commercial displays for such brands as Sony and Amazon. com. BMW's application of e-ink works via a wrap tailored to cover the entire body of the SUV. The wrap contains different color pigments that, when stimulated by various electrical signals, will rise to the surface of the skin, causing it to change hue. "The challenge is not so much as the technology but how to apply it to the car," Grote said. "The special thing with the car is: How do you shape it into a three dimensional surface? So they're laser cutting it into a three-dimensional curved screen."

Adrian van Hooydonk, the head of BMW Group Design, called the color-changing technology on the iX Flow, which has not been confirmed for production, part of the group's plan to develop "human-centric" products that stimulate all senses. BMW has said it will spend \$30 billion (\$34 billion) on future-oriented technologies by 2025. "For us, digitalization is about the total experience, and emotions that can be created with it," van Hooydonk said during the roundtable interview.

**New Tech Sees Virtual Debuts**  
BMW announced E-Ink to coincide with the Consumer Electronics

Show in Las Vegas. The company had planned a full program of in-person events at the annual technology show but canceled in favor of the virtual reveals streamed from Munich amid a rise in novel coronavirus cases. Mercedes-Benz also ditched plans to attend the convention, as did Amazon, Meta, and Lenovo, among others.

digital environments in and outside its vehicles. So-called "My Modes," set for launch in the second half of 2022, include one that displays digital artwork inside the car's cabin and a theater mode that improves entertainment in the rear portion of the cabin. Modes called Expressive and Relax are characterized by customizable sounds



Had BMW attended CES this year, it would have marked the first time the 105-year-old brand premiered an all-new model at the traditionally tech-heavy show. Instead, the electric zero-emission BMW iX M60 made its public debut via digital stream. The SUV is a more powerful version of the electric iX that BMW debuted in 2021, with a joint system output of 455 kW/619 PS from two electric motors, a maximum torque of 811 pound-feet with Launch Control, electric all-wheel drive, and high-performance chassis tuning. BMW says it will go from zero to 60 mph in 3.8 seconds. Along with the new i4 sport sedan, the iX and its variations reflect BMW Group's heavy investment in electric vehicles. As of December 2021, it had already delivered more than 1 million of them worldwide.

"A key driver to our success is our electric mobility push," said Pieter Nota, a member of BMW AG's Board of Management, during the launch. "Already, we have the next milestone in our sights: We aim to break through the 2-million-mile (EVs delivered) mark in the next two years." Immersive Experiences for Car Lovers The E-Ink was one of several new technologies BMW has developed to immerse the user in personalized

and digital patterns played across the vehicle. The effect sounds similar to the comfort technologies such as "Energizing" and "Warmth" modes that Mercedes-Benz has provided in many of its luxury vehicles; BMW executives say theirs are different and must be experienced to be appreciated. "BMW My Modes are unique for this car," Stephan Durach, senior vice president of BMW Group Connected Co. and technical operations, said during the roundtable. "It is a completely different thing. You really have to experience it by yourself." BMW Group is developing the specific soundscapes for all-electric models in its vehicles with the multiple award-winning film score composer Hans Zimmer, who most recently developed the soundtrack for Dune. (No word yet if you'll get a booming BRAAAM when you hit the gas.)


"Sound gives us the possibility of moving forward in a graceful and elegant way, without the noise and distraction that petrol and diesel engines have provided us with in the last century," Zimmer said during the launch. "Instead, we glide with invisible technology. Electricity is invisible, and anything invisible and with that power automatically is a good step into that future."


**از نیابت و ترگام**  
درخواست منجانب: ظریف بیگم زوجہ مرحوم محمد صابر برادرانج کرنے فوٹو کئی مسمی محمد صابر  
بت تاریخ فوٹو 03-09-201  
استہار برادرانج گاہی ہر خاص و عام  
معاہدہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدر میں درخواست سائل دفتر ہڈا میں زیر کاروائی ہے اس نسبت پڑاری  
حلقہ سے رپورٹ بشمول مطلوبہ بقوالا ریکارڈ طلب کے گئے جس سے عہاں ہوتا ہے کہ سائل  
سائل کا خاندان محمد صابر بت مورخہ 03-09-2013 کو فوت ہو چکا ہے اب سائل کو کئی  
شور و غوغا کے بعد سائل کے اندراج کرنے کی خواہ ہے  
اگر کسی شخص یا شخص کو کوئی عذر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ اپنا عذر یا اعتراض ساتھ یوم کے اندر پیش  
کریں۔ معاذ کرنے کے بعد کوئی عذر یا اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔  
نائب تحصیلدار **rfc**

از دفتر نائب تحصیلدار کریبی / کلتھہر با اجلاس نائب تحصیلدار کریبی / کلتھہر  
درخواست منجانب: فیاض احمد میر ولد محمد اکبر میر ساکنہ شیش پورہ برادرانج ربا سرٹیفیکٹ  
ذخیر قرائتیں

**استہار برادرانج گاہی ہر خاص و عام**  
معاہدہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدر میں درخواست سائل دفتر ہڈا میں زیر کاروائی ہے اس نسبت پڑاری  
حلقہ سے رپورٹ بشمول مطلوبہ بقوالا ریکارڈ طلب کے گئے جس سے عہاں ہوتا ہے کہ سائل  
سائل کو کئی شور و غوغا کے بعد سائل کے اندراج کرنے کی خواہ ہے  
اگر کسی شخص یا شخص کو کوئی عذر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ اپنا عذر یا اعتراض ساتھ یوم کے اندر پیش  
کریں۔ معاذ کرنے کے بعد کوئی عذر یا اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔  
نائب تحصیلدار **rfc**

**از نیابت وائلو**  
مضمون درخواست: عبدالرشید بدین ولد عبدالاحد سائل وائلو کرلہ پورہ برادر  
عطا گئی DOB certificate بتق پر سمارڈ شید بت  
استہار برادرانج گاہی ہر خاص و عام  
معاہدہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدر میں دفتر ہڈا کو ایک درخواست بابت حصول  
تاریخ پیدائش سرٹیفیکٹ بتق پر سمارڈ شید بت 02-11-2018 موصول ہوئی  
ہیں۔ اس نسبت ہر خاص و عام کو مطلع کیا جاتا ہے کہ اگر کسی شخص یا شخص کو  
کوئی عذر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ اپنا عذر یا اعتراض ساتھ یوم کے اندر پیش کریں۔  
معاذ کرنے کے بعد کوئی عذر یا اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔  
نائب تحصیلدار **nyc kz**

**The Jammu and Kashmir Board Of School Education Sub Office Pulwama**  
The candidate whose photograph is published in this notice is claiming to have lost hi/her Original Marks Card of Secondary School Examination (Class 10th)/Higher Secondary Examination Part-I (Class 11th)/ Higher Secondary Examination Part-II (Class 12th) issued by the Board of School Education with following particulars.  
  
**Name Zubair Mohi-ud-Din**  
**Parentage: Gh Mohi-ud-Din Najar**  
**Class: 10th Roll No: 349211 Session A/R Year 2012**  
Now the candidate has applied for Duplicate Marks Card. Anybody (if) having any objection may file the some before under-signed with (07) Seven days from the date of publication of this notice. Besides, the original marks card is teated as cancelled.  
Sd/ Assistant Secretary  
Sub Office Pulwama  
m.pul

**The Jammu and Kashmir Board Of School Education Sub Office Pulwama**  
The candidate whose photograph is published in this notice is claiming to have lost hi/her Original Marks Card of Secondary School Examination (Class 10th)/Higher Secondary Examination Part-I (Class 11th)/ Higher Secondary Examination Part-II (Class 12th) issued by the Board of School Education with following particulars.  
  
**Name : Asif Akbar Dar**  
**Parentage: Mohammad Akbar Dar**  
**Class: 10th Roll No: 729269 Session A/R Year 2008**  
Now the candidate has applied for Duplicate Marks Card. Anybody (if) having any objection may file the some before under-signed with (07) Seven days from the date of publication of this notice. Besides, the original marks card is teated as cancelled.  
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**از نیابت و ترگام**  
با اجلاس سید فیاض احمد نائب تحصیلدار و ترگام  
درخواست منجانب: مشتاق احمد ولد محمد شفیع کوثر سردان ساکنہ دیولگام  
بفرض حصول: ST-سرٹیفیکٹ  
استہار برادرانج گاہی ہر خاص و عام  
معاہدہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدر میں سائل نے ایک درخواست بفرض حصول ST سرٹیفیکٹ دفتر ہڈا میں پیش  
کیا ہے جو کہ زیر کاروائی ہے۔ پڑاری حلقہ سے رپورٹ طلب کی گئی جس سے عہاں ہے کہ سائل کا  
کنیدہ ذیل افراد ہیں۔  
نمبر شمار نام و ولدیت پیشہ  
1 محمد شفیع ولد غلام سردان عمر رسیدہ  
2 رشیدہ زوجہ محمد شفیع گھریلو کام  
3 مشتاق احمد ولد محمد شفیع مزدوری  
4 شمیمہ زوجہ مشتاق احمد گھریلو کام  
5 الیزہ دختر مشتاق احمد زین تعلیم  
6 سعدیہ دختر مشتاق احمد زین تعلیم  
7 نادیہ دختر مشتاق احمد زین تعلیم  
اس طور پر سائل کا کنیدہ 07 افراد پر مشتمل ہے۔ لہذا سرٹیفیکٹ اجراء کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص کو کوئی  
اعتراض ہوگا وہ اپنا اعتراض ایک ہفتہ کے اندر دوران دفتری اوقات میں اپنا اعتراض پیش کرے۔  
معاذ کرنے کے بعد کوئی بھی اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔  
نائب تحصیلدار **RNA**

**از نیابت و ترگام**  
با اجلاس سید فیاض احمد نائب تحصیلدار و ترگام  
درخواست منجانب: نظیر احمد کوثر سردان ولد محمد شفیع کوثر سردان ساکنہ دیولگام  
بفرض حصول: ST-سرٹیفیکٹ  
استہار برادرانج گاہی ہر خاص و عام  
معاہدہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدر میں سائل نے ایک درخواست بفرض حصول ST سرٹیفیکٹ دفتر ہڈا میں پیش کیا  
ہے جو کہ زیر کاروائی ہے۔ پڑاری حلقہ سے رپورٹ طلب کی گئی جس سے عہاں ہے کہ سائل کا کنیدہ  
ذیل افراد ہیں۔  
نمبر شمار نام و ولدیت پیشہ  
1 نظیر احمد ولد محمد شفیع مزدوری  
2 گلشن زوجہ نظیر احمد گھریلو کام  
3 مسرت جان دختر نظیر احمد زین تعلیم  
4 یاسر احمد ولد نظیر احمد زین تعلیم  
5 شاہد احمد ولد نظیر احمد زین تعلیم  
اس طور پر سائل کا کنیدہ 05 افراد پر مشتمل ہے۔ لہذا سرٹیفیکٹ اجراء کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص کو کوئی اعتراض  
ہوگا وہ اپنا اعتراض ایک ہفتہ کے اندر دوران دفتری اوقات میں اپنا اعتراض پیش کرے۔ معاذ کرنے  
کے بعد کوئی بھی اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔  
نائب تحصیلدار **RNA**


**از عدالت انگریز کمیشنر جیٹ دہوال ( تحصیلدار ناگ ) با اجلاس مرگزار صاحب**  
درخواست منجانب: خورشید احمد ولد عبدالمیلہ ساکنہ منڈوہا پورہ  
بفرض اجرائی تاریخ پیدائش سرٹیفیکٹ نام: علیہ جان  
استہار برادرانج گاہی ہر خاص و عام  
معاہدہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدر میں سائل اسلاید مذکورہ پلانے عدالت ہڈا میں ایک درخواست حلفی بیان پیش کیا  
ہے سائل اسلاید کے تحت تاریخ پیدائش 16/11/2018ء میں جن میں سرٹیفیکٹ پیدائش گانے  
کا جواز ہے لہذا سرٹیفیکٹ مذکورہ اجراء کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص کو کوئی عذر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ ایک ہفتہ  
کے اندر دوران دفتری اوقات میں پیش کرے بصورت دیگر کوئی بھی اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔  
ایگزیکٹو کمیشنر جیٹ دہوال ( تحصیلدار ناگ )  
**RNA**

**OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT REGIONAL TRANSPORT OFFICER BUDGAM KASHMIR**  
**NOTICE**  
Where a application for transfer of ownership has been recieved from one. Shri : Shafqat Islam S/o: Zia Ul Islam R/o: Green Avenue Hyderpora (Transferor) of LMV Sanro. Vehicle bearing registration number JK04A -5702 Chasis number 12518 Engine no. 13000 Model 2006. in favour of Shri.Abdul Hamid Ganaie S/o.Ali Mohammad Ganaie R/o Ichikoot Budgam (Transferee)  
Now therefore it is notified for the information of the general public that objections if any to the proposed transfer of ownership shall be filed in writing in the office of the Assistant Regional Transport office ARTO Budgam within a period of 7 days from the date of publication of this notice in the daily newspaper Kashmir Observer.  
No. ARTO/ BUDGAM.5468  
Dated 06/01/2022 Assistant Regional Transport officer Budgam Kashmir mcb

**OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT REGIONAL TRANSPORT OFFICER BUDGAM KASHMIR**  
**NOTICE**  
Whereas an application has been recieved from one. Shri : Sajad Ahmad Sofi S/o: Gulnaz Panzan owner of vehicle bearing Registration No: JK04E 6169 for cancellation of hire purchase agreement with M/S Shriram Transport Finance Ltd B/U Srinagar Now therefore it is notified for the information of the general public that objections if any to the proposed cancellation of hire purchase Agreement shall be filed in writing in the office of the Assistant Regional Transport office ARTO Budgam within a period of 07 days from the date of publication of this notice in the daily newspaper .  
No. ARTO/ BUDGAM.5477  
Dated 06-01-2022 Assistant Regional Transport officer Budgam Kashmir mcb

**OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT REGIONAL TRANSPORT OFFICER BUDGAM KASHMIR**  
**NOTICE**  
Whereas an application has been recieved from one. Shri : Inayat Ali Bhat S/o: Ali Mohammad Bhat R/o: Kenehama Baghat Kanipora Budgam owner of vehicle bearing Registration No: JK04E 0514 for cancellation of hire purchase agreement with M/S J&K Bank B/U Summerbugh Budgam .  
Now therefore it is notified for the information of the general public that objections if any to the proposed cancellation of hire purchase Agreement shall be filed in writing in the office of the Assistant Regional Transport office ARTO Budgam within a period of 07 days from the date of publication of this notice in the daily newspaper .  
Assistant Regional Transport officer Budgam Kashmir mcb  
No. ARTO/ BUDGAM.5476  
Dated 06-01-2022

**از نیابت و ترگام**  
درخواست منجانب: ذاکر حسین مسعودی ولد مرحوم محمد امین مسعودی ساکنہ موضع بابا گنڈ پتھیل  
ترگام حصول اجراء ہے پسماندگان سرٹیفیکٹ تحت 34 SRO  
استہار برادرانج گاہی ہر خاص و عام  
معاہدہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدر میں درخواست سائل دفتر ہڈا میں زیر کاروائی ہے اس نسبت پڑاری  
حلقہ سے رپورٹ بشمول مطلوبہ بقوالا ریکارڈ طلب کے گئے جس سے عہاں ہوتا ہے کہ سائل  
سائل والد مرحوم محمد امین مسعودی محمد مال میں ملازم تھا جو کہ مورخہ 07-12-2021 کو  
دفتری طور فوت ہو چکا ہے کنیدہ سائل ذیل افراد پر مشتمل ہے  
1 فریدہ بیگم زوجہ ستوانی 55 سال گھریلو کام  
2 صفیہ امین دختر ستوانی 29 سال شادی شدہ بیرون گھر  
3 ذاکر حسین پسر 22 سال بیرونگار  
4 نصرت امین دختر 20 سال زین تعلیم  
اسکے علاوہ کوئی بھی افراد کنیدہ نہیں بتایا گیا ہے سرٹیفیکٹ زیر بحث اجراء  
کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص یا شخص کو کوئی عذر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ اپنا عذر یا اعتراض ساتھ یوم  
کے اندر پیش کریں۔ معاذ کرنے کے بعد کوئی عذر یا اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔  
نائب تحصیلدار **rfc**

**Rather Family**  
**Mohammad Salim Wani Bereaved**  
  
President, Private Diagnostic Centre Association JK, Mr Umar Iqbal Dhar expressed grief over the sad demise of Mohammad Shafi Rather Brother-in-Law of Mohommad Saleem Wani, District President, Government Pharmacist Association. While expressing sympathies with the bereaved family Umar Iqbal said his passage Is a big loss to the family especially, to the only son Burban Shafi who left no stone turned to serve the purpose of being son to the deceased father and stood besides with uprightness to earn blessings out of human & socio-religious services. He expressed sympathy with the bereaved family and termed life a contribution to live again by virtue of deeds. During condolence meeting silence was observed to offer prayers in favour of deceased for his placement among good doers at higher levels of jannat, people at large and relations of deceased In particular are informed that Rasm-e-Charam shall be observed on 7th of January 2022 at their ancestral graveyard Miskeen Bagh Nowpora Srinagar at 2.30 pm after Friday prayers. info

**از دفتر نائب تحصیلدار کلتھہر**  
معاون: مضمون درخواست منجانب: فاروق احمد محمد عبدالاحد محمد ساکنہ شیش پورہ تحصیل کریبی  
نسبت حصول RBA سرٹیفیکٹ بتق پر سمارڈ فاروق  
استہار برادرانج گاہی ہر خاص و عام  
معاہدہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدر میں درخواست سائل دفتر ہڈا میں زیر کاروائی ہے اس نسبت پڑاری  
حلقہ سے رپورٹ بشمول مطلوبہ بقوالا ریکارڈ طلب کے گئے جس سے عہاں ہوتا ہے کہ سائل  
سائل کو کئی شور و غوغا کے بعد سائل کے اندراج کرنے کی خواہ ہے  
اگر کسی شخص یا شخص کو کوئی عذر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ اپنا عذر یا اعتراض ساتھ یوم کے اندر پیش  
کریں۔ معاذ کرنے کے بعد کوئی عذر یا اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔  
نائب تحصیلدار **ajl**

**Electricity Installation transfer**  
The electricity Consumer ID: 0202050002644 is to be transferred from Fayaz Ahmad R/o Sector-A Umerabad Colony Peerbagh to Shaista Javid W/o: Javid Ahmad Sector-A Umerabad Colony Peerbagh Srinagar (Sub Division Baghat Barzullah Srinagar). If anybody has any objection he may file the same within 7 days at Baghat Barzulla division after that no objection will be entertained.  
info



## NIT's TORUS Club Organizes Model Quiz

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Torus-design thinking club of National Institute of Technology (NIT) Srinagar in collaboration with IIC organized a virtual model quiz titled 'Auto CAD and Solid Works' on Thursday in which over 60 students participated.

The event was presided by Director NIT Srinagar, Prof. (Dr.) Rakesh Sehgal. He said Torus is acting as a platform for students interested in designing courses.

Prof. Sehgal said New Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has given vast scope for the students and technology can act as a facilitator by bringing innovation to quizzes and ensuring active participation among students, he said.

He appreciated the organizers for conducting such programs for the students.

Registrar NIT Srinagar, Prof Kaiser Bukhari in his message said torus is the student's talent exploring the platform. Over the past several months, the Torus team has worked hard to nourish the hidden talent of students, he said.

Prof. Bukhari said in future, Torus will organise workshops, and seminars on various topics to engage students, he said.

HOD Mechanical Department, Prof. Nazir Ahmad Sheikh also appreciated the teamwork of Torus and assured full support from the department.

Dr. Saad Parvez, Head Innovation, Incubation & Entrepreneurship Development Centre (IIEDC) attended the event and stated that IIEDC will always extend their support in grooming young talent at NIT Srinagar.

## Admin Fully Prepared To Handle Possible Third Wave: DC

Agencies

Srinagar: Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Aijaz Asad on Thursday said that the administration is encapsulated with a lot of challenges as the new year has got a warmer welcome by a new variant of COVID-19 Omicron which has been declared as a variant of concern by the WHO.

Asad said that the transition from 2021 to 2022 doesn't look like a smooth transition as the new variant is a new challenge for them, which means "we are not out of Covid-19 situation as yet."

He said that the way there is a spike in cases across the globe with the imminent threat of a third wave, 2022 seems to be a bigger challenge than 2021.

Asad said that all efforts are being put in place to overcome the third wave and the audit for more oxygen plants is in progress, while review is being conducted for drugs supplies and staff in hospitals. "All the things are reviewed based on the experiences of the virus in the previous year. The medical teams are better repaired and battle-hardened to combat the third wave of virus," he said.



He said as there is a spike in positive cases, all international travellers at Srinagar International Airport are tested and they are kept in isolation till test reports are received. "In Srinagar around 700 international travellers have come which include tourists, local residents of J&K, of which 6 travellers have found positive, however, no case of Omicron has been detected as yet," he said.

About winter preparedness, Asad said that the main difficulty in winters is to ensure smooth supply of electricity. "LG has directed to repair all the damaged transformers immediately along

with 100 buffer stock of transformers are in place in Srinagar district, while around 230 electric poles are stored for winters as well to overcome the challenge," he said.

He also said that there is sufficient stock available for a smooth supply of electricity in the winter. "All transformer repair workshops have been activated and the staff is on duty with night shift duties. For snow clearance, the mechanical engineering wing, SMC and R&B are fully prepared. The men and machinery required for snow clearance will be deployed as they are in readiness mode," he said.

## Fire damages LCMA office at Miskeen Bagh

Observer News Service

Srinagar, JANUARY 06: A fire broke out in the office complex of Lakes Conservation and Management Authority (LCMA) at Miskeen Bagh area of Srinagar in the wee hours of Thursday here, resulting in partial damage to equipment and official records.

Soon after the incident, the teams from the Fire & Emergency Department reached the spot promptly and doused the fire without causing further damage to the office building.

As per an official hand-out issued here, in the fire incident the Correspondence Section/ Establishment Section of Head Office suffered considerable damage and in addition to that Secretary's Office too suffered damages. Besides, two washrooms and a Photostat room got partially damaged and most of the records inside the room gutted in the fire incident.

## NSD's TIE Workshop Concludes At Srinagar

Observer News Service

Srinagar, JANUARY 06: The 15-day long Drama-in-education workshop of Theatre-in-Education (TIE) Centre of the National School of Drama (NSD), Srinagar which began on December, 20 last year concluded here yesterday.

Held in collaboration with J&K Academy of Art, Culture and Languages, the purpose of the workshop was to introduce Kashmiri youth to techniques and nuances of drama-in-education.

Apart from Manoj Bhatia and Hafeez Khan, Manish Saini and Dependra Rawat were the other theatre practitioners who imparted nuances of new age drama to the workshop participants.

Monitored by NSD's TIE Chief, Abdul Latif Khatana and TIE Srinagar coordinator Gulzar Ahmad, diverse range of topics were covered during the workshop by theatre persons.

In all 20 students

from various districts of the valley including Kulgam, Pulwama, Ganderbal, Srinagar and Budgam participated in the workshop, which primarily focused on drama and its new age genres.

Commenting on the workshop, NSD's Srinagar Coordinator, Gulzar Ahmad said that TIE would continue to hold such events in the Kashmir valley in the forthcoming months also.

"Our aim is to train more and more diverse groups of theatre enthusiasts with focus on creating drama talent pool in the valley," Ahmad said.

Pertinent to mention here that after its inauguration in October last year this was the first formal activity of Theatre-in-Education (TIE), Srinagar Centre in Kashmir.

Among others, the concluding function of the workshop was attended by Academy's Srinagar based senior functionaries besides teaching faculty of the NSD.

## Mayor Reviews Arrangements For Snow Clearance

Observer News Service

Srinagar:- In wake of fresh Snowfall forecast prediction, Mayor Srinagar visited various administrative wards in Srinagar City to review snow clearance arrangements that has been put in place in all wards of Srinagar City.

He visited Ward 2 Lal Chowk, Ward 30 Jawahar Nagar, Ward 31 Chanpora Ward 32 Hyderpora and Ward 33 Humhama.

Mattu who was accompanied by concerned Corporators of these wards along with Senior Officers of the Corporation including Joint Commissioner Works Mr Rajinder Singh, Executive Engineer Mechanical Mr Ittrat Naseem, Chief Sanitation Officer Nazir Ahmed Baba, Chief Transport Officer Mohamad Sayad Shiekh, Assistant Compost Officer Mohamad Ashraf, all Ward Officers, Sanitary Inspectors passed on clear instructions to the concerned that there should be no lack in snow clearance drives as it has to be swift and prompt snow removal exercise in case of fresh snowfall.



During his visit to Ward 2 Lal chowk, he directed concerned that besides clearing snow from city centre points, pavements/ footpaths of the Corporation including Joint Commissioner Works Mr Rajinder Singh, Executive Engineer Mechanical Mr Ittrat Naseem, Chief Sanitation Officer Nazir Ahmed Baba, Chief Transport Officer Mohamad Sayad Shiekh, Assistant Compost Officer Mohamad Ashraf, all Ward Officers, Sanitary Inspectors passed on clear instructions to the concerned that there should be no lack in snow clearance drives as it has to be swift and prompt snow removal exercise in case of fresh snowfall.

Mayor said besides prioritizing snow clearance from all roads leading to hospitals and religious places, including shrines and gurdwaras,

the lanes, by-lanes and the interiors of the residential areas has to be cleared in parallel for hassle free pedestrians movement.

There should be no snow left unattended anywhere in the residential areas in other wards of the city too said Mr Mattu. He further stressed that there has to be a complete organised team work in snow clearance drives with a proper Coordination among one and all.

Ward officers on the occasion were directed to take a tour along with the concerned Corporators and supervisors in their respective wards so that the zones are created within a ward for easy, quick and Beat-wise timely removal of snow.


**EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICE**  
**KASHMER**  
(KASHMIRI AMERICAN SOCIETY OF HEALTHCARE, MEDICAL EDUCATION AND RESEARCH)


**Free Critical Care Ambulance Service 24\*7**  
**In Srinagar, Baramulla, Anantnag & Kupwara**  
 Acute medical and surgical emergency calls will be taken by experts and triaged.  
 Our expert team will rush to the spot.  
 Appropriate care will be provided and patient will be shifted to the nearby hospital for further management.  
**For Emergency call: 9484-100-200**  
**0194-240-4000**  
 Kindly cooperate and make it a Success!

**ایمر جنسی طبی سروس**

**شہر سرینگر، بارمولہ، اننت ناگ اور کپوارہ کے لئے ایمر جنسی صورت حال میں**

**مفت ایبویٹنس کا آغاز**

انتہائی تازہ اور فوری طور پر طبی امداد کے سختی فراہم کو خدمت فراہم کی جائے گی

امداد کے لئے موصول ہونے والوں کو ہر گز کے ڈر کے بغیر پہنچنے کے بعد ہر پورہ رہائی کی جائے گی۔

ہمارے ماہرین کی ٹیم کے ساتھ سوچنے پر توجہ کے مناسب طبی امداد کی سہولت فراہم کرے گی۔

مریض کو جتنی عہدداشت کے لئے نزدیکی ہسپتال منتقل کیا جائے گا۔

کسی بھی ایمر جنسی کے لئے رابطہ کریں:-

**9484-100-200**

**0194-240-4000**

برائے کرم ہمارے طبی خدمت کو کامیاب بنانے کے لئے تعاون دیجیے۔

Please donate to Account Number: 0365040100013064, J&K Bank branch Lal Mandi

**KASHMER in Collaboration with HELP Foundation**

**ASTHMA ATTACK BREATHING TROUBLE**

- Inability to Breathe
- Difficulty Talking
- Rapid & Shallow Breathing
- Racing Heart
- Irregular Heartbeats
- Lips Turning Blue

**HEART ATTACK SYMPTOMS**

- Chest pain or discomfort
- Feeling weak, light headed, or faint
- Pain or discomfort in the jaw, neck, or back
- Pain or discomfort in arms or shoulders
- Sweating
- Shortness of breath

**STROKE SYMPTOMS**

- Balance loss/Dizziness
- Eyes(Vision change)
- Facial drooping/ numbness
- Arm weakness /numbness
- Speech slurring (confusion)
- Sudden severe headache
- Time to Call

**TRAUMA/HEAD/CHEST OR ABDOMINAL INJURY OR SEVERE MOTOR VEHICLE ACCIDENTS**

**CALL CRITICAL CARE AMBULANCE 24/7**

**☎ 9484100200 / 01942404000**

**درد اور تنگی کی بیماریوں کی علامتیں:**

- ❖ سانس لینے میں دقت ہونا
- ❖ بات کرنے میں رکاوٹ
- ❖ تیز گھبراہٹ یا سانس نہ پانا
- ❖ دل کا تیزی سے دھڑکانا
- ❖ دل کا تیزی سے دھڑکانا
- ❖ لبوں کا نیلا ہونا

**دل کا درد اور پھٹنے کی علامتیں**

- ❖ سینے میں درد اور بے چینی
- ❖ کھڑکی محسوس کرنا یا کھانسی
- ❖ پیٹھ یا بازو، گردن اور سینے میں آگ یا کھانسی
- ❖ بازو یا گردن میں درد یا آگ یا کھانسی
- ❖ پسینا
- ❖ سانس کا تیزی سے لینا

**سٹرک کی علامتیں**

- ❖ توازن کا فقدان، کھچا، غوطی
- ❖ آنکھوں سے ٹپکنے کی بات
- ❖ پیٹھ میں درد محسوس کرنا یا کھانسی
- ❖ بازو یا گردن میں درد یا کھانسی
- ❖ پیٹھ میں درد یا کھانسی
- ❖ پیٹھ میں درد یا کھانسی
- ❖ پیٹھ میں درد یا کھانسی

**ٹراuma / سر کی چوٹ / سینے پر چوٹ غیر معمولی زخم یا کسی بھی حادثے کا شکار**

**فوری طور مدد کرنے والی ایبویٹنس کو بلائیے 24/7**

**☎ 9484100200 / 01942404000**

**KASHMER in Collaboration with HELP Foundation**

### DIAL-EMMA

- TRAFFIC POLICE : 9419993745, 01998-266686
- PCR: 0194-2452092,2455883
- PDD: 0194-2450213
- FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES : 2479488,245222,2452155
- CAPD: 18001807011
- SMC HEALTH OFFICER: 9469409081
- Ambulance: Kashmir EMS Service: +91 94841 00200

### AIRPORTS

SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311



### RAILWAYS

- SRINAGAR: 0194-2103259
- ANANTNAG: 01932-228243
- BARAMULLA: 0194-102029
- BUIBHERA: 01932-228243
- PAMPORE: 01933-294132
- PATTAN: 01954-293507
- QAZIGUND: 01951-296153

### HIGHWAY STATUS

Sgr-Jammu highway - ( Closed )  
Mughal Road - (Closed)  
Srinagar- Leh- (Closed)



**HIJRI CALENDAR**  
03 Jumada al-Sani  
1443

### PRAYERS

**FAJR 6: 08**  
**ZUHR 12:35**  
**ASR 3:57**  
**Magrib 5:37**  
**ISHA 7: 04**

## This Day In History

- 754 Pope Stefanus II arrives in Ponthion
- 1325 - Afonso IV succeeds Dionysius as King of Portugal
- 1558 - Calais, last English possession in France, retaken by French
- 1579 - England signs an offensive & defensive alliance with Netherland
- 1610 - Galileo Galilei discovers the first three moons of Jupiter: Io, Europa & Ganymede
- 1618 - Francis Bacon becomes Lord Chancellor of England
- 1622 - Germany & Transylvania sign Peace of Nikolsburg
- 1698 - Russian Tsar Peter the Great departs Netherlands for England
- 1790 - French Revolution: A major riot breaks out in Versailles as people demand lower bread prices
- 1822 - Liberia colonized by Americans
- 1904 - Marconi Co establishes "CQD" as 1st international radio distress signal
- 1915 - World War I: Germany's Kaiser Wilhelm approves strategic bombing of Britain, but forbids bombing London, fearing his relatives in the royal family might be killed
- 1922 - The Anglo-Irish Treaty is ratified by Dail Eireann by a 64-57 vote
- 1935 - French Foreign minister Pierre Laval and Benito Mussolini sign the Franco-Italian Agreement
- 1940 - Winter War: The Finish 9th Division defeats the Soviet forces on the Raate-Suomussalmi road despite being significantly outnumbered
- 1941 - Chinese Kuomintang forces under orders from Chiang Kai-shek open fire on the surrounded Communist New Fourth Army at Maolin, Anhui Province, killing or capturing 7,000 troops
- 1942 - WW II siege of Bataan starts
- 1944 - US Air Force announces production of 1st US jet fighter, the Bell P-59
- 1945 - Lord Haw-Haw (William Joyce) reports total German victory in the Ardennes
- 1945 - The last surface engagement between Allies and Japanese in the Pacific campaign, World War II
- 1946 - Cambodia becomes autonomous state inside French Union
- 1949 - 1st photo of genes taken at University of Southern California by Pease & Baker
- 1953 - US President Harry Truman announces American development of the hydrogen bomb
- 1954 - Georgetown-IBM experiment, 1st public demonstration of a machine translation system, is held at IBM's head office in New York
- 1958 - USSR reduces army to 300,000
- 1959 - US recognizes Fidel Castro's Cuban government
- 1959 - American gangster Meyer Lansky flees Cuba for the Bahamas due to the Cuban Revolution and rise of Fidel Castro
- 1960 - The Polaris missile is tested
- 1962 - Assassination attempt fails on Indonesian President Sukarno
- 1964 - Bahamas becomes self-governing
- 1983 - President Reagan ends US arms embargo against Guatemala
- 1984 - Brunei becomes the sixth member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).
- 1986 - STS 61-C mission scrubbed at T -9m because of weather problems
- 1986 - US President Reagan announces economic sanctions against Libya
- 1987 - Kapil Dev takes his 300th Test wicket, at 28 the youngest
- 1989 - Akihito becomes the 125th Emperor of Japan after the death of his father Horohito
- 1989 - International Conference on Limitation of Chemical Weapons opens in Paris
- 1990 - Tower of Pisa closed to the public after leaning too far
- 1991 - Saddam Hussein prepares his troops for what he says will be a long violent war against the US
- 1992 - Last day of Test cricket for Imran Khan
- 1993 - The Fourth Republic of Ghana is inaugurated with Jerry Rawlings as President.
- 1993 - Bosnian War: Bosnian Army launches a surprise attack on Kravica, a village in Srebrenica

*From KO Archives*

## Kashmiris being hounded in Delhi

Srinagar - Kashmiris spread throughout the country are having a tough time following the Fidayeen attack on the Red Fort in New Delhi.

In various cities, police and intelligence agencies have instructed hotels and inns to refuse accommodation to Kashmiris. Kashmiris residing in Jammu too are bearing the brunt of security measures which have been tightened on the advent of January 26.

Kashmiris have been told to vacate their rooms from nearly ail hotels in Delhi and those arriving from other cities are not being allowed to stay in the capital. Police and intelligence agencies have picked up scores Kashmiri students and traders for questioning over the last 10 days. So far the Jammu and Kashmir government has not taken a serious note of the situation. (CNS.)

(KASHMIR OBSERVER, 07 January, 2001)



## US-Led Coalition Comes Under Fire In Iraq And Syria



Agencies

**BAGHDAD:** Bases used by the US-led coalition fighting the Daesh group came under fire Wednesday in Iraq and Syria but without causing any casualties, officials said, the latest of several attacks.

Attacks targeting installations hosting coalition forces have come as Tehran and its allies across the Middle East held emotional commemorations marking the second anniversary on Monday of the assassination of Iranian commander General Qasem Soleimani and his Iraqi lieutenant in a US drone strike at Baghdad airport.

The US said at the time that Soleimani was planning imminent action against US personnel in Iraq, a country long torn between the competing demands of its principal allies Washington and Tehran.

On Wednesday evening, five rockets targeted an air base used by the coalition in western Iraq.

"We observed five rounds... the closest impact was two kilometers (1.2 miles) away," a coalition official said Wednesday. "No damage, no casualties."

The rockets landed near the Ain Al-Asad air base in the desert of Al-Anbar province. The same base was targeted

on Tuesday, when US-led coalition forces shot down two armed drones.

On Monday, the coalition also shot down two armed drones targeting a compound attached to a US diplomatic base at the airport in Baghdad, the Iraqi capital.

Photos obtained by AFP showed remains of one of the drones with the message "commanders' revenge operations" written on it.

The January 3, 2020 strike, ordered by then-US president Donald Trump, hit a car in which Soleimani and Abu Mahdi Al-Muhandis were traveling on the edge of the airport.

Five days after his killing, Iran fired missiles at an air base in Iraq housing US troops and another near Irbil in the country's north.

Since then dozens of rockets and roadside bombs have targeted US security, military and diplomatic sites across Iraq.

Western officials have blamed hard-line pro-Iran factions for the attacks, which have never been claimed.

The Hashed Al-Shaabi — a coalition of former paramilitary groups now integrated into the Iraqi state security apparatus — has repeatedly called for the withdrawal of US troops deployed in Iraq as part of the coalition.



Millions in Afghanistan face starvation amid harsh winter and US sanctions.

## Millions In Afghanistan Staring At Death, Starvation Amid Harsh Winter, US Sanctions

Agencies

The crippling sanctions imposed on Afghanistan by the US government and its allies are taking a heavy toll, exposing millions of crisis-stricken people to the vagaries of freezing winter.

Eloi Fillion, head of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) delegation in Afghanistan, on Tuesday expressed grave concern over the unfolding situation as winter chill sets in.

"Heavy snow in Kabul today. Temperature might drop to -9 this week," Fillion tweeted, adding that he was hearing "stories of people burning furniture, shoes or tyres to keep warm".

"Due to economic collapse, thousands of Afghans are left with nothing to cope with increasing challenges," he hastened to add.

The United Nations estimates that nearly 23 million Afghans — about 55 percent of the population — face extreme levels of hunger, with nearly nine million at risk of famine as winter sets in.

In winter, most of the provinces in Afghanistan become harshly cold, with temperatures dropping below freezing levels.

This year, as the South Asian

**DUE TO ECONOMIC collapse, thousands of Afghans are left with nothing to cope with increasing challenges,"**

country grapples with its worst humanitarian crisis, fueled by freezing of assets by the US and its international allies, millions face difficult living conditions.

UN agencies had earlier warned that millions of Afghans could run out of food before the onset of harsh winter and around one million children were at the risk of starvation and death.

Taliban, which came to power after a sweeping takeover in August, has been trying to rebuild the country's battered economy, but the US sanctions have severely impeded the efforts.

Almost five months after the US-led coalition hastily abandoned the country, millions of Afghans are on the brink of starvation, with no food and no money.

Parallels are already being drawn between Afghanistan and Yemen, the two strategically located, mineral-rich countries

plundered and destroyed by foreign aggressors.

Soon after the Taliban laid siege to Kabul mid-August, US and its international partners raced to cut off Afghanistan's access to international aid and froze roughly \$10 billion in assets belonging to the country's central bank.

The move triggered the rapid collapse of public finances and precipitated the current crisis. European Union also then followed the suit, stopping development assistance to the country, followed by the International Monetary Fund and World Bank.

A looming humanitarian catastrophe, economic crisis, and unemployment are the main challenges people in Afghanistan are facing today.

"After the political change, all aid agencies cut off their aid to Afghanistan, there were a lot of problems in the country," Ahmad Wali Haqmal, spokesperson for Taliban's Finance Ministry, was quoted as saying.

Taliban's acting Minister of Economy, Din Mohammad Hanif, said earlier this week that the activity of the Asian Development Bank—which was providing salaries for a number of employees—have been halted and most of the half-finished projects from the previous government were suspended.

## Afghanistan's Taliban Regime Not To Allow Any Fencing Along Durand Line By Pak

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Afghanistan's Taliban regime has said that it will not allow fencing by Pakistan in any form along the Durand Line, issuing a stern warning to Islamabad, amid escalating tensions between the neighbouring countries on the contentious issue of border fencing, a media report said.

"We (Taliban) will not allow the fencing anytime, in any form. Whatever they (Pakistan) did before, they did, but we will not allow it anymore. There will be no fencing anymore," Mawlawi Sanaullah Sangin, Commander of the Taliban, told Afghanistan's Tolo News on Wednesday.

Sangin's sharp reaction comes following Pakistan Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi's comments earlier this week, when he said this issue would be resolved peacefully, through diplomatic channels.

"Certain miscreants are raising the issue unnecessarily, but we are looking into it. We are in contact with the Afghan government. Hopefully, we would be able to resolve the issue diplomatically," Qureshi said during a press conference in Islamabad on Monday.

The Durand Line, the 2,670-km international border between Afghanistan and Pakistan has witnessed periodic skirmishes between forces of these two countries.

Last month, a clash was reported along the south-eastern Nimroz province after Pakistani forces tried to extend barbed fences into the Afghan terri-



tory, with the Taliban forces promptly retaliating by tearing them down.

Similarly, on December 22, both sides were at loggerheads again, this time along the eastern Nangarhar province, according to Afghanistan-based Khama Press news agency.

Pakistan has completed almost 90 per cent fencing work along the 2,670-km border despite protests from Kabul, who contested the century-old British-era boundary demarcation that splits families on either side.

Successive regimes in Afghanistan, including the US-backed governments in the past have disputed this demarcation, which has historically remained a contentious issue between the two neighbours.

The border, known internationally as the Durand Line, was named after the British civil servant, Mortimer Durrand, who had fixed the limits of British India after consultation with the then Afghan government in 1893.

## EXPLAINER: What's Behind Unrest Rocking Oil-Rich Kazakhstan



Associated Press

**MOSCOW:** Kazakhstan is experiencing the worst street protests the country has seen since gaining independence three decades ago. Government buildings have been set ablaze and at least eight law enforcement officers have been killed.

The outburst of instability is causing significant concern in Kazakhstan's two powerful neighbors: Russia and China. The country sells most of its oil exports to China and is a key strategic ally of Moscow.

A sudden spike in the price of car fuel at the start of the year triggered the first protests in a remote oil town in the west. But the tens of thousands who have since surged onto the streets across more than a dozen cities and towns now have the entire authoritarian government in their sights.

President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev has cut an increasingly desperate figure. He first sought to mollify the crowds by dismissing the entire government early Wednesday. But by the end of the day he had changed tack. First, he described demonstrators as terrorists. Then he appealed to a Russian-led military alliance, the Collective

Security Treaty Organization, for help in crushing the uprising and the CSTO agreed to send an unspecified number of peacekeepers.

**Why are people angry?**

Of the five Central Asian republics that gained independence following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Kazakhstan is by far the largest and the wealthiest. It spans a territory the size of Western Europe and sits atop colossal reserves of oil, natural gas, uranium and precious metals.

But while Kazakhstan's natural riches have helped it cultivate a solid middle class, as well as a substantial cohort of ultrarich tycoons, financial hardship is widespread. The average national monthly salary is just under \$600. The banking system has fallen prey to deep crises precipitated by non-performing loans. As in much of the rest of the region, petty corruption is rampant.

The rally that set off the latest crisis took place in the dusty western oil town of Zhanaozen. Resentments have long festered in the area over a sense that the region's energy riches haven't been fairly spread among the local population. In 2011, police shot dead at least 15 people in the city who were protesting in support of oil workers dismissed after a strike.

## Covid's Impact On Democracies: Did The World Lose Freedom's Fragrance?

Agence France-Presse

**PARIS:** From a litany of lockdowns to mandatory mask-wearing and Covid passes to access entertainment and sporting venues, the pandemic has led to sweeping restrictions on civil liberties in some of the world's oldest democracies.

Among Western countries, European nations particularly have been quick to crimp basic freedoms in the name of fighting the virus.

French President Emmanuel Macron caused a furore this week by saying he wanted to "piss off" those who refuse to get vaccinated by "limiting as much as possible their access to activities in social life".

The remarks from the leader of a country that sees itself as a global beacon of liberty underscore the extent to which the pandemic has changed national priorities.

The United States has also taken aggressive steps, including closing



its borders to most of the world for 20 months and making vaccinations mandatory for all federal employees and staff of big companies. The Berlin-based rights watchdog Civil Liberties Union for Europe warned in a report last year that measures targeting the unvaccinated could "exacerbate existing inequalities".

"(They) may create a two-tier society where some people may enjoy an extensive set of freedoms and rights while others are excluded," the report said.

**Persecution or protection?**

At the start of the pandemic, gov-

ernments used sweeping lockdowns and curfews to try to contain the virus.

But in the past year, most countries began refining their strategies, rolling out digital passes allowing people to show they are vaccinated.

Faced with the Omicron variant, some governments, notably Austria and the Netherlands, reverted to one-size-fits-all tactics and ordered people back indoors during the end-of-year celebrations.

But worldwide, many countries are now turning the screws on citizens who are refusing to be jabbed.

Austria kept the unvaccinated confined to their homes last month after lifting a partial lockdown. In February, the country will be the first in Europe to make vaccines compulsory for most people.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson says his country also needs to have a "national conversation" about mandatory vaccinations, echoing similar comments from the German government.

## Lord Nazir Ahmed Convicted Of Sexual Offences



Agencies

A BRITISH court convicted Lord Nazir Ahmed, a former British parliamentarian of Pakistan descent, on Wednesday of sexual offences against two children in the 1970s.

According to the BBC, the court found Lord Ahmed guilty of a serious sexual assault against a boy and the attempted rape of a girl. The Sheffield Crown Court heard the repeated sexual abuse happened in Rotherham, Yorkshire, when the former MP was a teenager.

The 64-year-old had denied the charges.

Judge Mr Justice Lavender will decide later when Lord Ahmed

will be sentenced.

Prosecutor Tom Little told the court Nazir Ahmed had attempted to rape the girl in the early 1970s, when the defendant was aged 16 or 17 but she was much younger. The attack on the boy, who was aged under 11 at the time, also happened during the same period.

Mr Little said Lord Nazir Ahmed claimed the allegations were a "malicious fiction", but a phone recording of a 2016 conversation between the two victims showed they were not "made-up or concocted".

The woman's call was prompted by an email from the male victim saying: "I have evidence against that paedophile," the jury previously heard.

**PROSECUTOR TOM LITTLE TOLD THE** court Nazir Ahmed had attempted to rape the girl in the early 1970s, when the defendant was aged 16 or 17 but she was much younger.

### NEWS MAKERS

## 'Save Me From An Arranged Marriage': UK Man Advertises Himself On Billboards To Find A Wife

Agencies

It can be brutal out there when it comes to searching for a partner and most desi kids have the threat of an arranged marriage looming over their heads if they can't find someone but one man's attempts to save himself from that fate has us and the rest of the internet chuckling. Muhammad Malik, 29, literally put himself out there — on billboards, no less — to save himself from an arranged marriage.

The Londoner put up signs around the UK city of Birmingham that read "Save me from an arranged marriage" and added a link to his website find-malikawife.com for potential suitors to get more information on what he's looking for in a companion.

"Huge thanks to anyone who's messaged in support or has actually applied



to be my wife, I see you don't worry!! I've been overwhelmed with all the messages but I love it, pls keep them coming. I'll get back to you as soon as I can inshallah," he captioned an Instagram picture of him standing in front of his billboard.

In a video on the website, he introduced himself as an entrepreneur and foodie who's religious and is looking for "someone who's working on her Deen". He said he's okay with any ethnicity but

since he comes from a loud, Punjabi family, "the banter has to be 100."

He added a form on the site for whoever is interested, along with his social media handles for Twitter, Instagram and Facebook, which were flooded after his antics went viral. He has received a sea of responses for which his friends are making spreadsheets, according to Birmingham Live, to sort through them.

## Thanks For "Free Publicity": UK Spy Chief To China On James Bond Spoof

Agence France-Presse

**LONDON:** Britain's spy chief on Thursday thanked China's state news agency for "free publicity" after it posted a spoof of James Bond that mocked the Western intelligence community's growing focus on threats posed by Beijing.

The rare response by MI6 head Richard Moore comes as China and Britain clash over Beijing's treatment of its Uyghur minority and creeping authoritarianism in the former British colony of Hong Kong.

Moore -- codenamed "C" within the agency -- previously said adapting to China's rise was the spy service's "single greatest priority" and warned of Chinese "debt traps, data exposure and vulnerability to political coercion".

Debt traps refer to China extracting concessions such as the



use of ports from countries that sign up to its soft-power infrastructure initiative when they default on loan repayments.

In a tongue-in-cheek Twitter post on Tuesday, state news agency Xinhua said it had uncovered "leaked video" of a "secret meeting" between British and Ameri-

can spies after Moore bumped Beijing higher on MI6's agenda.

The attached clip -- titled "No Time to Die Laughing" -- featured a pair of Chinese actors playing fictional British spies called "James Pond" and "Black Window".

In his Thursday response, Moore tweeted: "Thank you for

your interest (and the unexpected free publicity!)"

He posted a link to a speech he gave in November in which he said China sought to "exploit the open nature" of British society and "distort public discourse and political decision making across the globe".

In four and a half minutes of what Xinhua called "rib-tickling moments" filled with canned laughter, the elegantly dressed duo enter a castle and start discussing a dossier on Chinese espionage tactics, only to realise the papers actually refer to the United States.

Pond -- codenamed "Agent 0.07" -- then blasts the "fictional Chinese debt trap and data trap" as a "pathetic" excuse to get more funding for British intelligence.

In a call with an apparent CIA operative, Pond learns the US has tapped his mobile phone.



## Medium Danger Avalanche Warning Issued Across J&K

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** The department of disaster management affairs Thursday cautioned inhabitants residing in upper reaches across Jammu and Kashmir of possible 'medium danger avalanches' amid prevailing inclement weather conditions.

A DDMA official said that the 'medium danger avalanche warning exists for the higher reaches (above 2000 meters) in different tehsils across Jammu and Kashmir for upcoming 24 Hours.

Notifying the areas as Shahbad Bala, Sallar, Pahalgam, Kokernag (Anantnag), Tulail, Gurez (Ban-

dipora), Uri, Buniyar, Gulmarg (Baramulla), Gund, Kangan, Sonamarg (Ganderbal), Drass (Kargil), Warwan, Mughal Maidan, Marwah, Drabshalla, Chattroo (Kishtwar), Bhaderwah (Doda), Devsar, Damhal Hanji Pora (Kulgam), Trehgam, Machil, Lalpora, Kralpora, Keran, Karnah (Kupwara), Surankote (Poonch), Banihal and areas around Jawahar Tunnel (Ramban) the official said people living in these areas are cautioned to take all necessary precautions and avoid venturing on the avalanche prone slopes.

Notably, MeT authorities have forecasted of a 'heavy to very heavy' snow spell during January 7 to January 8.

## ACB Charges 39 FCS&CA Officials, Flour Mill Owners

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** The Anti Corruption Bureau on Thursday produced a chargesheet against 39 persons, which include Assistant Directors, Tehsil Supply Officers, Supervisors, Storekeepers, Ration Dealers of FCS&CA and flour Mill Owners, for 'misappropriation of ration.'

"Anti-Corruption Bureau produced a charge sheet before Learned Special Judge Anti-Corruption Jammu in case FIR No. 14/2006 P/S VOJ (now ACB-Jammu) under section 5 (1) (d) r/w section 5 (2) PC Act, 2006 BK and 120-B and Section 467, 468, 471 and 120-B RPC against total 39 accused persons including Ashok Kumar Pandita the then Assistant Director Mills Jammu and other public servants including various the then Assistant Directors, then Tehsil Supply Officers, Supervisors, Storekeepers, Ration Dealers of FCS&CA Jammu and private beneficiaries i.e. Flour Mill Owners", reads a statement issued by the anti-graft body.

"The instant case was registered on basis of JSC wherein it was alleged that the ration under (BPL) Below Poverty Line, (AAY) Antodaya Anna Yojna and (APS) Annapurna Schemes has been drawn in excess ration in Tehsil Jammu Rural by fraudulent means and was sold in the open market", the statement reads adding joint surprise check was conducted on the allegations of excess drawl of ration under below poverty line, Antyodaya Anna Yojna and Annapurna schemes and fraudulent sale of excess drawn ration in the market in Tehsil Jammu Rural, which consisted of four blocks namely Block Marh, Satwari, Bhalwal and Dhanal revealed that Gopal Dass Sharma by acting in league with K.K Gandotra and others during the year 2004-2005, had fraudulently and dishonestly drawn

ration viz 95007.72 qtls of Rice, 136331.03 qtls. of Wheat and 35834.69 qtls. of Atta under BPL and AAY schemes on subsidized rates during the year 2004-05 as against the actual requirement of 48,723 qtls. of rice and 48,723 qtls. of wheat only", as per the statement.

The entire quantity of food grains, it reads, was drawn in excess of the actual requirements under said schemes had fraudulently and dishonestly been shown issued to ration dealers who were either non-existent or had denied having received any ration in excess of the actual requirements under said schemes during the year 2004-05 and stood disposed of by above named public servants to confer undue benefit upon themselves to the tune of Rs 6, 08, 91,039/-. In a similar manner from Nov. 2004 to March 2005 Gopal Dass Sharma & K.K Gandotra and others had also drawn excess quantity of 601 qtls. of rice on account of ration meant for distribution free of cost among the rationees categorized under Annapurna scheme and fraudulently/dishonestly shown issued to various non-existent ration dealers and misappropriated Rs 5, 40,900/- as cost of rice.

"The above named public servants in this manner while abusing their official position in league with each other had conferred upon themselves undue pecuniary advantage of Rs. 6,14,31,939/- thereby causing corresponding loss to the State exchequer. The allegations leveled in the JSC were substantiated and accordingly the Vigilance Organization, Jammu (now ACB) registered the instant FIR under section 5(1) (d) r/w section 5(2) PC Act, 2006 BK and 120-B RPC against Gopal Dass Sharma (now expired), the then A.D. Trade and Stores CAPD Jammu, K.K Gandotra (now expired), the then Tehsil Supply Officer CAPD Jammu & others."

## Langer Reviews R-Day Arrangements In Jammu



Observer News Service

**JAMMU:** Divisional Commissioner Jammu, Dr Raghav Langer on Thursday reviewed the arrangements being put in place by district administrations for the R Day- 2022 celebrations, here at video conferencing meeting with Deputy Commissioners and Senior Superintendents of Police.

The meeting was informed that the main function shall be held at MA Stadium, Jammu, where the chief guest shall unfurl the National Flag.

The Deputy Commissioners of Jammu division alongwith Senior Superintendents of Police and other concerned officers participated in the meeting through video conferencing.

The Div Com took a comprehensive review of arrangements in all the districts and the Deputy Commissioners apprised him about the same.

It was informed in the meeting that review meetings have been

held in all the districts to finalise the arrangements. The DCs informed that committees have been constituted for putting in place all necessary arrangements and rehearsals for Parade and cultural programme have also been started.

The Div Com directed the DCs to ensure periodic testing of all the participants in view of the covid situation and making seating arrangements as per Covid SOPs. He also asked them to highlight beneficiary oriented government schemes through tableaux.

Sensitizing Deputy Commissioners about their role and responsibility, the Div Com instructed them to ensure that all arrangements are made in advance for smooth conduct of the celebrations for the National Event in all districts.

He stressed on making fool-proof arrangements at Sub Division and Panchayat level as well.

Dr Langer also reviewed security arrangements in the districts and took feedback from the concerned SSPs.

### Lok Sabha Elections

## Poll Expenditure Of Candidates Raised To Rs 95L In J&K, Rs 75L In Ladakh

Agencies

**SRINAGAR:** The Government of India has increased the election expenditure of candidates for Lok Sabha polls in Jammu & Kashmir to Rs 95 lakh and in Ladakh to Rs 75 lakh.

According to a notification issued by the Union Law Ministry, the central government, after consulting the ECI, has increased the election expenses of each candidate in Lok Sabha polls in Jammu & Kashmir to Rs 95 lakh from Rs 70 lakh.

The notification also reveals that election expenses of each candidate in Ladakh UT have been hiked to 75 lakh from Rs 54 lakh.

The election expenditure of each candidate for assembly



elections in J&K has been hiked to Rs 40 lakh from Rs 28 lakh.

The decision of the government is based on the recommendation made by the poll panel.

Last major revision in the

election expenditure limit for candidates was carried out in 2014, which was further increased by 10% in 2020. Simultaneously, the Election Commission formed a committee comprised of Sri Harish Kumar, retd. IRS Officer, Sri Umesh Sinha, Secretary General and Sri Chandra Bhushan Kumar, Sr. Deputy Election Commissioner in Election Commission of India to study the cost factors and other related issues, and make suitable recommendations.

The committee invited suggestions from political parties, chief electoral officers and election observers. The committee found that there has been increase in number of electors and cost inflation index since 2014 substantially—(KNO)

## Maintaining High Transparency In Functioning: Govt

Observer News Service

www.janbhagidari.gov.in

**JAMMU:** The Government today maintained that it has taken path-breaking initiatives to promote transparency in execution of developmental projects across Jammu and Kashmir.

These initiatives are unique in the country which provide latest updates on the projects with geo-tagged photographs and other project-related information.

J&K Government launched web portal 'EMPOWERMENT (Enabling Monitoring and Public Overview of Works Being Executed and Resources for Meaningful Transparency)' or 'Janbhagidari' which enables citizens to overview works/projects being implemented in their areas and become a partner in the process of development with the features of providing timely feedbacks and suggestions for improving expenditure outcomes.

The portal contains details of all UT and District Capex projects implemented in Jammu and Kashmir from 2020-21. The said website can be viewed on

This web portal also contains links to MGNREGA, PMAY and SBM with real-time information on their implementation in Jammu and Kashmir. Similarly, progress of PMGSY is available on the website of J&K PWD through the given link on the Ministry's website.

Moreover, the details for the projects executed during the past two years is available on various public platforms including the official website of the Finance Department, Government of Jammu and Kashmir and can be publically accessed on the url https://jak-finance.nic.in.

The web portal of the Finance Department is hosting information on projects implemented under Back to Village and JKIDFC. As per the displayed information, under the UT Sector, 9514 projects were completed during the financial year 2020-21 for which the complete information of district-wise projects along with timelines, cost, geo-tagged photographs, and number of beneficiaries has been compiled as a pictorial

compendium and is available for public viewing.

Further, pictorial compendium of 2177 projects was completed under the Back to Village programme is hosted on the website. In addition, details of 1100 projects which were earlier languishing for several years on account of various hurdles, were revived and completed by the Jammu and Kashmir Infrastructure Development Finance Corporation (JKIDFC); are also available on the portal.

Similarly, the website is also hosting information on District Capex with 1676 completed projects along with their timelines, cost, geo-tagged photographs, and number of beneficiaries.

The Government is committed to complete the developmental projects within stipulated timelines while maintaining highest level of transparency and accountability. Accordingly, the list of the above mentioned completed projects in addition to several others is readily available for the public along with the district-wise and sector-wise project details.

## Mainstream Camp Slams Land Transfer To Army

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Several mainstream parties, including National Conference and Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) on Thursday slammed government's move to allot a huge chunk of land to armed forces in the twin tourist resorts of Gulmarg and Pahalgam.

The PDP president Mehbooba Mufti on Wednesday claimed allocation of huge tracts of land to the armed forces in tourist areas of Jammu and Kashmir confirmed the intention of the Centre to "convert Jammu & Kashmir into a military garrison".

The former chief minister was reacting to the Jammu & Kashmir government's decision to declare 1358 kanals and 6 marlas of land as "strategic areas" for training and operational requirements of the armed forces in Gulmarg and Sonamarg tourist resorts in Kashmir Valley.

"Allocating thousands of kanals to armed forces that too in tourist areas confirms GOI's intention to convert J&K into a military garrison. Under the 'state land' pretext, our land is up for grabs & to add insult to injury locals are being evicted from their homes," Mehbooba tweeted.

The Jammu and Kashmir National Conference also denounced the allocation of 1034 Kanals of land to the Army under 'Strategic Areas Act' in the Valley's tourist resorts.

This was said by the Party General Secretary Ali Muhammad Sagar while taking to media at Nawa Subah. "Our reservations about the 'strategic areas act' are evidenced by this reckless land transfer. We had contended that the act will be used arbitrarily to grab civilian, tourist and other mineral resources rich areas. The recent transfer order substantiates our detestation for the act," he said.

Criticising the measure, Sagar said that the constitutional propriety demanded to halt any such decisions because such decisions are a consequence of August 5,2019 decisions, which are constitutionally suspect and awaiting the due validation from the constitutional bench of the Supreme Court of India. He argued that by taking such measures, the government was anticipating the verdict of the Supreme Court.

Despite India's climate pledges, Sagar stated, GoI is diverting more forest land to the armed forces. "Ever since Article 370 was read down and the Union government took charge of the erstwhile states, 250 hectares of ecologically fragile land have been diverted for non-forestry purposes. This stands in stark contrast to the pledge taken by India at the recent COP26 climate summit to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by increasing the country's forest cover," he added.

He contended that such wanton land transfers



will make the tourist heavens Gulmarg and Sonamarg wear a 'battle zone' look. "Continuous movement of army traffic will also have a far reaching impact on the local tourism activities in the shape of curbs. We hope that the government will review such a reckless decision. Putting our land and resources for grabs and sale on one pretext on another is akin to adding insult to our injuries," he added.

Meanwhile, CPI (M) leader Mohammad Yousaf Tarigami has asked the government to review the decision to declare land in Gulmarg, Sonamarg as "strategic areas"

"These are two most popular tourist destinations in the valley," the PAGD spokesperson said remarking further there were already a lot of areas with the army for such purposes."

Gulmarg and Sonamarg along with Pahalgam are three most popular tourist destinations in the Valley which need to be promoted for tourism purposes, Tarigami said underlining need of the hour is to develop tourism infrastructure in Kashmir which can generate employment for burgeoning numbers of unemployed youths.

"So-called real estate development by the government can't generate employment or create livelihood opportunities, but are only meant for giving benefits to the corporate sector", Tarigami said in a statement.

"We hope that the government will review its decision and focus on developing tourism in Gulmarg, Sonamarg and other tourist destinations", Tarigami said.

## 2 Militants, Two OGWs Held In Srinagar: Police

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Police on Thursday claimed to have busted a militant module of The Resistance Front and Gazwatul Hind by arresting two alleged militants and two over ground workers (OGWs) in Barzulla area of this capital city.

Addressing a press conference in Srinagar, Deputy Inspector General of Police Central Kashmir range, Sujit Kumar Singh said that two militants and two OGWs were arrested during a joint naka laid by police and CRPF at Barzulla bridge in Srinagar.

"The arrested militants and OGWs were affiliated with TRF/MGH, which are off-shoots of LeT and JeM," he said.

He said the arrests came as part of the investigations being conducted into the killing of a property dealer Rouf Ahmed in Safa Kadal area on December 12, 2021.

"During the course of investigation, movement of some suspects was detected in Srinagar City. Based on further analysis and credible human intelligence, Srinagar Police detected suspicious movement of militants in Bhagat Barzulla area," said DIG Singh, who was flanked by SSP Srinagar Rakesh Balwal.

The DIG Singh said that the

arrested militants have been identified as Suhail Qadir Khanday S/o Ghulam Qadir Khanday, resident of Tral, Pulwama, an active militant, R/O Tral pulwama and Suhail Mushtaq S/o Mush-taq Ahmed Waza, a resident of Niklora, also an active militant.

He said that during the search, two pistols along with two pistol magazine and 30 pistol bullets were recovered on spot. "On further questioning of militants, arms and ammunition including two militants and two OGWs were arrested during a joint naka laid by police and CRPF at Barzulla bridge in Srinagar city," the DIG said, adding that in total four pistols, eight pistol magazines, 99 live rounds, two pistol silencers have been recovered from their hideout in Srinagar city," the DIG said, adding that in total four pistols, eight pistol magazines, 99 live rounds, two pistol silencers have been recovered in the case.

He said that the arrested militants also revealed names of two OGWs who were also arrested. The OGWs were identified as Basit Bilal Makaya S/O Bilal Ahmed Makaya R/O Qamar Abad Qamarwari, Srinagar and Naikoo Imad Nasar S/O Farooq Ahmed Kilora, Shopian, the police officer said.

He said that in this connection Case under FIR No 08/2021 of Saddar PS under sections 7/25 of the arms act and sections 18,23 of UAP Act has been registered in PS Saddar.

## Militants Got Directions From Saudi, Pak Handlers

**SRINAGAR:** The police on Thursday claimed that two Kashmiri youth, including a doctor based in Saudi Arabia were giving directions to the militant module of The Resistance Front and Gazwatul Hind busted in this capital city.

Addressing a press conference in Srinagar, Deputy Inspector General of Police Central Kashmir range, Sujit Kumar Singh said the two militants and two OGWs arrested from Barzulla disclosed that they were operating in Srinagar city on the direction of Asif Maqbool Dar of Bemina, who is currently in Dammam, Saudi Arabia.

Besides Dar, who is said to be a doctor, he said another Kashmiri youth Sajjad Gul of HMT Parimpora at present Pakistan were directing the module.

"Both the handlers from Saudi Arabia and Pakistan were providing them weapons and money through a network of OGWs being identified. This module has also done recce of security installations like NIA office, Delhi Police Headquarters etc. and shared same with handlers in Pakistan," the DIG said.

"As per the investigation the targets in city for killings were also selected and conveyed to them by Dr Asif and Sajad Gul. Suhail Qadar Khanday was working in Saudi Arabia with Dr Asif and in August 2021 on the direction of Dr Asif he came back and started working as an operative of TRF/MGH/ for coordinating the collection of Arms/ Ammunition, money and militant attack in Srinagar City."

## Prof. Romshoo Named As WIHG Governing Body Member

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** The Government of India has nominated Prof. Shakil A. Romshoo, Vice-Chancellor, Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST Awantipora) and an acclaimed earth sciences scientist, as a Member of the Governing Body of the prestigious Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology (WIHG), Dehradun, for a period of three years.

WIHG Dehradun, is an autonomous research institute of the Ministry of Science and Technology, Govt. of India.

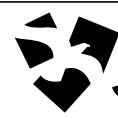
The Institute is recognised as a national laboratory of international repute with state-of-the-art laboratories and other infrastructural facilities for undertaking advanced levels of research in earth sciences in the country.

Prof. Romshoo has successfully completed several national and international research projects with the geographical focus of the western Himalayas and has published more than 200 highly cited research papers.

More than a dozen national and international awards have been conferred upon him in recognition of his research contribution, and he has also been elected as a Fellow of the Indian Academy of Sciences, the Indian Society of Remote Sensing, and the Indian Society of Geomatics.

Professor Romshoo is the member of a scores of policy making committees and Working Groups on environment, water, climate change and disasters at local, national and international level.

The nomination has been lauded by the entire IUST fraternity.



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**S/O: Mohammad Shaban Yatoo**  
**R/O RawalPora Baghat Barzullah.**

**Director:**  
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**W/o Mehraj Ud Din Yatoo**  
**R/o RawalPora Baghat Barzullah.**

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## KASHMIR OBSERVER

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### K O V I E W

## Bracing For Third Wave

India is once again witnessed a fresh surge in Covid infections. And it appears that the third wave is just around the corner. On Wednesday India recorded over 90,000 new Covid-19 cases. This has forced New Delhi to impose a weekend curfew. Punjab and Karnataka have followed suit. In Mumbai, the government has made rapid RT-PCR test mandatory for all international passengers landing at the international airport. Mumbai is also leading with the largest number of infections at 10,860 cases followed by Delhi at 5,481 cases. Cases are sing in Kolkata, Chennai and Bangalore.

Considering the fresh wave is riding on the back of the new virus mutant Omicron, the situation could get much worse unless the government takes swift pre-emptive measures. For now, the number of infections is getting bigger and bigger every day. Unless the union government is prepared, this could take a massive toll on the healthcare infrastructure. The facilities at the hospitals still aren't sufficient enough to take the brunt of an all-encompassing Omicron wave. Any further increase in the cases could trigger chaos. Hospitals could run short of beds and patients could once again scramble for oxygen cylinders, medicines and medical equipment such as oxygen concentrators.

Before the situation gets to this point, there is a need for awareness and sensitization of the people about the unfolding grave situation. The union government has to take a lead in this, so also the media. People need to be cautioned, even made to fear what's coming. Only strict observance of the Standard Operating Procedure by the people could see us through this crisis. But this has not so far been the case, at least not to the extent that is required to get a grip on the runaway spike.

Many things other than enforcing the lockdown could be done. For one, there's an urgent need to enforce safety precautions in order to contain the pandemic. And to start with, there has to be an aggressive campaign to enforce the use of masks. More alarmingly, the masks are conspicuously absent from the faces of a significant number of the people walking on the streets or those of the passengers using public transport. And none of these violators is taken to task.

Much is at stake in India. The economy that was battered over the last two years can't afford one more year of disruption. In Kashmir too, the vaccination and booster doses should be pursued on a war footing to get the situation back on rails. Other than some brief periods of normalcy now and then, the Valley has been shut down for nearly two years. On the national level, having experienced the devastating fallout of the second Covid wave, the government can't afford to be caught unprepared for yet another wave.

### OTHER OPINON

## Wrong Answer

The University Grants Commission (UGC)'s letter to central universities, asking them to teach courses based on student demand, is based on questionable academic logic. How many students queue up for a course often reflects how much it boosts the chances of their employment. While important, for a university, that must not be the only metric in determining the span of its academic ambition. The work of producing knowledge, training students in critical thinking and pushing ideas towards new frontiers — the reasons why societies invest in universities — cannot rest on a narrow, instrumentalist approach. That is to say, a university must make space for arcane philosophy as much as economics, even if there are few takers for the former. Seen in this light, the UGC's insistence that courses be taught or stopped based on the number of enrolled students seems rather short-sighted. The Delhi University Democratic Teachers' Front has said that it fears that "rationalising" courses in this manner would have grim consequences for social science and language departments, as well as job losses for those who teach in them.

That is not to say that departments must not align courses to "the marketplace of ideas". But that presupposes a degree of autonomy — the freedom to design courses, and draw up syllabi — that few public universities in India enjoy. Universities also need resources as much as autonomy. The National Education Policy 2020's ambitions for education and call for greater autonomy to higher educational institutions is undercut by several factors, from the slashing of funds to the challenges of inequality. The NEP's emphasis on inter-disciplinary learning cannot also be served by shrinking the platter of courses on offer. The lack of autonomy is also reflected in the shrinking space for free thought in universities. The growing state hostility to debates and dissent shows up in the desire of governments to vet the subject of webinars or to sanitise classrooms of all contentious ideas in the name of nationalism.

True, one of the biggest challenges of the higher education system is its inability to produce employable graduates in sufficiently large numbers. While universities and colleges must do more on this front, the decision of how to maximise their resources, how to hit the sweet spot between academic ambition and market pragmatism, must be left to the teaching community. Each university will find the answer to that question on its own terms. The UGC must not impose top-down criteria that further shrink the space for experimentation and innovation in higher education.

The Indian Express

# Vaccinating The Young Has India Left It Too Late?

There Is Still Time For Right Messaging To Encourage  
Vaccination In Both Children, Adults



A HEALTH WORKER takes swab sample of children to test for COVID-19 in Prayagraj, India...Image Credit: AP

Jyotsna Mohan

AS WE SIT  
COMPLACENT  
believing

Omicron itself is the  
new herd immunity,  
jingoistic  
congratulatory  
messages on the  
vaccine records for  
children are  
inevitable. Instead,  
there is still time for  
the right messaging  
— to encourage  
vaccination in both  
children and adults

Finally, 15-18 age group in India is lining up for COVID-19 vaccination and it is not a day too soon.

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal who attended a political rally recently has tested positive, the unfathomable night curfews are back across some Indian states and there is no longer any doubt over the third wave.

In the midst, of this almost two years since the pandemic hit, a section of our younger population at long last gets the security blanket it deserves as the country stares and stares down at an Omicron surge.

The children — over 600,000 who have registered while almost 70 million are eligible — though can only get Bharat Biotech's Covaxin while the government has staunchly refused to allow families the option of vaccines like Pfizer that are now globally vaccinating even those as young as 5 years. Until now, Covishield has been doing the heavy lifting in the country.

What could impact the vaccination drive is the scepticism over Covaxin which hasn't been the choice for all, especially for their children. Their doubts were further magnified when some centres showed vaccines with expired dates that had been relabelled as safe.

Without an official notification, nervous parents are now scrambling to understand if the extended shelf life is worth the risk. They have reasons to be conflicted. For the last two years there has been no communication or answers, but the questions keep piling up.

Why has it taken so long to vaccinate our children? Why are children younger than 15 — almost 27% of India's population — still not allowed, even though across the world the minimum age has been 12 and going lower? Why are citizens not being given the choice of vaccination, at least for their children? Why have schools been the first to close, down even though cinemas, bars and malls remain open?

It is not just high schoolers who need to get back to normality.

Those younger than 15 are not dispensable, foundation years are crucial in a child's development, and students across age groups are already academically behind. School closures and moving to online classes may have worked for a short period of time but motivating students in social isolation for a third year is underestimating the ever-widening gap in education.

Not just that, by denying the younger children a vaccine without disclosing any data we are also overlooking at the mental impact on them. In families where they are the lonely warriors without a job, they hide fear and insecurity. These children are scared because while no one is talking about it, they hear and understand that without vaccination they are exposed.

### Doubters and nay-sayers

No vaccination of course can save anyone from getting Omicron, but health experts are unanimous — it cuts down the risk of hospitalisation, something anti-vaxxers who these days are the new trolls on the block, conveniently overlook. They could also do well to remember that as children we are first introduced to an MMR or polio vaccine and then the world.

Vaccination will also allow the children a first shot at attending schools physically when the situation eases. The caveat of course is that authorities need to treat education as a priority.

The silence has not just allowed fake information on WhatsApp to flourish but also misinformation to flow. Science though has not been having a good couple of years.

The disregard for Omicron is peak Indian herd mentality. The narrative that 'it is mild' has thrown all caution to the wind. We have ascertained (through another WhatsApp forward) that Omicron is our best bet for herd immunity. Masks have been disdainfully thrown away and social distancing is taunting the variant,

whether at political rallies (clearly our leaders prefer not to learn anything from the second wave) Goa beaches or a market in Delhi.

Omicron is highly transmissible — the sharply rising numbers are a proof and at this moment, we are all playing dodge ball. Anecdotal evidence coming from some cities also points to hospitalisation which could perhaps indicate that the more lethal Delta is also still in the mix. The new variant has spread to 23 states in the blink of an eye, and this is when testing is not even up to the mark.

Our scant respect for health care is unfortunate and no less than a back-stabbing. It was only months ago that our system was heaving to keep us afloat. We on the other hand have been obstinate in our belief that this is only about us — that our irresponsibility does not impact the person sitting next to us or burden an already strained health care.

The doctors have been the only ones cautioning — that this isn't over yet and any increase in hospitalisation they say will have a domino effect. But more importantly, as the medical staff themselves begin to fall sick — more than 100 doctors have fallen sick in Kolkata alone in the last 24 hours, who will treat the patients? The fallout of the delay in giving them the boosters is evident.

As we sit complacent believing Omicron itself is the new herd immunity, jingoistic congratulatory messages on the vaccine records for children are inevitable.

Instead, there is still time for the right messaging — to encourage vaccination in both children and adults. Watching closely are children below the age of 15 who are hoping they won't remain an afterthought.

Views expressed in the article are the author's own and do not necessarily represent the editorial stance of Kashmir Observer. The article was originally published by Gulf News

The author is a writer and a journalist



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## Airport Hassles

Weathermen had predicted snowfall in Kashmir this week. While many parts of the valley witnessed snow, srinagar only had a drizzle of it. However, even then, the hassles were not limited.

The past three days has seen cancellation of flights from srinagar — a very

disappointing occurring given how PR machinery goes gaga over the airport round the year.

Srinagar Airport is an international airport. However, given its ill preparedness, it doesn't seem to qualify as one according to standards. Airport authorities have quoted low visibility as the reason for cancellations. While this may be the genu-

ine reason, why can't our airport be equipped enough to tackle these hurdles. What are we to do when snow hits the ground?

What is it to us that night flights operate at Srinagar airport when even the day ones don't take off. Had the Srinagar-Jammu high way been functional, one would rather have taken a quick trip via road and reached fea-

sible destinations.

Something needs to be done to cover the lapses as much as possible and keep increasing the standards in our airport. Yes, safety comes first but travel also ensures commute — we have to find a way to be equipped enough to ensure both.

Nazima Mukhtar



MINDFUL FRIDAYS

# Love In The Heir

How Your Childhood Experiences Affect Your Adult Romantic Relationships

Wasim Kakroo

**D**o you feel trapped in a toxic relationship with a person and do not know why it is so and how to come out of it? Do you feel you always attract romantic partners in your life who abuse you and leave you with more bruises than before? Do you find yourself emotionally sensitive especially in close interpersonal relationships? Do you feel you are moody and it has become a part of who you are?

The answer may lie in the adverse experiences you have had while you were growing up as a child or an adolescent.

Childhood experiences are crucial to our emotional development. Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) or traumatic experiences in childhood such as physical, emotional or sexual abuse, emotional neglect, exposure to domestic violence, and traumatic loss or bereavement can affect adult relationships in a variety of ways.

Adults who have experienced developmental trauma may develop Complex Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, or "cPTSD," which is marked by difficulties in emotional regulation, consciousness and memory, self-perception, distorted perceptions of abusers, difficulties in interpersonal relationships, and negative effects on life's meaning.

Identity formation is an important element of natural development that occurs throughout a person's life. Because basic survival takes precedence over, and uses resources ordinarily allocated for, normal self-development, identity — including one's sense of being good enough, integration of emotion and intellect, basic awareness of emotional



traumatised psyche, can assist readers in identifying areas of difficulties and beginning the work of healing, repair, and personal growth.

environments that are not healthy for them. Even when they try to make different and better choices, they find others that suit their traumatic identity, resulting in re-traumatization through repetition of the past and thus the cycle of abuse continues in their life.

They may find themselves in the company of emotionally unavailable people, abusive or narcissistic persons, or trying to rescue and fix those they date. They desire to find someone who can provide them with what they rationally know they need and want, yet unconscious patterns take them down unwelcome, old alleys.

Often, there is a strong "chemistry" in new relationships that makes it appear as if the partnership will be different, only to discover with sadness that it is all too familiar. When friends warn them, it's not uncommon for them to choose a new romance over a trustworthy buddy. Getting into harmful relationships on a regular basis can be disturbing and confusing, causing one to question one's self-understanding and locking one into the previous identity while preventing new identities from developing.

People, who have had negative developmental experiences with personal relationships, may choose to avoid contact and separate themselves. As an attempt to break the cycle of destructive relationships, this might occur early on or later in life. However, effective interpersonal interactions are essential for personal development because they provide chances for growth and change. Avoiding them as a self-protective tactic in adulthood further impedes the formation of a fully mature personality, establishing and cementing a self-perception of unworthiness and self-condemnation. Such people may think that they are too defective to care for others who deserve better. But such thinking is not a norm for an average u s .

It is not uncommon for people who have been traumatized by significant caregivers (especially during

their childhood or adolescence through ACEs) to end up with friendships, romantic relationships, and even job

relationships with others.

People may feel emotionally numb or as if they don't have any emotions at all. They may have a limited range of emotions. For example, they may only be able to sense vague emotions like annoyance or boredom, or they may suppress negative emotions until it explodes out as anger. They may only experience negative emotions

**GETTING INTO HARMFUL** relationships on a regular basis can be disturbing and confusing, causing one to question one's self-understanding and locking one into the previous identity while preventing new identities from developing

about themselves, such as disgust and self-loathing, and shrink back from anything or anyone who portrays a positive image of them. They may be uncomfortable with gratitude from others, not knowing how to take a compliment, or mistrustful of people who express kindness. They may take on an overly intellectualised persona, acting stiff with their lips sealed off or awkward in social situations. This causes problems in personal relationships (because emotions are necessary for closeness and influence job choices), and thus restricts their growth.

While reading about the impacts of trauma due to Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) in adulthood can be disappointing, and it can be frightening to consider doing the work of recovery and identity construction beyond the wounded self, I must say therapeutic efforts done in collaboration with a trained psychologist are beneficial. Addressing these difficulties pays off, however it is not given and may make a client feel frustrated to tread a path of recovery. For some, accepting an element of darkness in a flexible and ethical way, rather than rigidly opposing one's nature, might be a key to sparking adult development.

Recovery, grieving over the past adverse experiences, and growth frequently take longer than one would like, and re-connecting with oneself needs work to be done at multiple levels. Even if it doesn't seem possible or true, developing a sense that long-term goals are attainable and worth striving towards is critical. Working toward having basic self-care, as well as feeling comfortable requesting help when trust in caregivers has been lost, is an important first step and a trained psychologist who has experience working on trauma cases can help such people to take this first important step.

*The author is a licensed clinical psychologist (alumni of Govt. Medical College Srinagar). He works at Kashmir Life Line, a free mental health counseling service. Author can be reached at wasimkakroo21@gmail.com*







# 'High-Fiber Diet Associated With Improved Response To Immunotherapy In Melanoma Patients

“

**Our study sheds light on the potential effects of a patient's diet and supplement use when starting treatment with immune checkpoint blockade. These results provide further support for clinical trials to modulate the microbiome with the goal of improving cancer outcomes using dietary and other strategies**

## Agencies

Patients with melanoma who reported eating more fibre-rich foods when they began immunotherapy treatment survived longer without cancer growth than patients with insufficient dietary fibre intake, according to new research from the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center.

The findings of the study were published in the journal Science.

The benefit was most noticeable in patients who did not take commercially available probiotic supplements. Parallel pre-clinical studies supported the observational findings.

"Research from our team and others has shown that gut microbes impact response to immunotherapy treatment, but the role of diet and probiotic supplements have not been well studied," said co-senior author Jennifer Wargo, M.D., professor of Genomic Medicine and Surgical Oncology. "Our study sheds light on the potential effects of a patient's diet and supplement use when starting treatment with immune checkpoint blockade. These results provide

further support for clinical trials to modulate the microbiome with the goal of improving cancer outcomes using dietary and other strategies."

Patients who reported eating more fruits, vegetables, legumes and whole grains met the study threshold for sufficient fibre intake. The 37 patients with sufficient fibre intake had improved progression-free survival (median not reached) compared to the 91 patients with insufficient fibre intake (median 13 months). Every five-gram increase of daily fibre intake was associated with a 30 per cent lower risk of cancer progression or death.

When the patients were further grouped according to high- or low-fibre diet and commercially-available probiotic supplement use, response to immunotherapy was seen in 18 of 22 patients (82 per cent) who reported both sufficient fibre intake and no probiotic use, compared to the response seen in 60 of 101 (59 per cent) patients who either reported insufficient fibre intake or probiotic use. The response was defined as complete or partial complete or partial tumour shrinkage or stable disease for at least six months. Probiotic use alone was not associated with a significant difference in

progression-free survival or odds of response to immunotherapy.

"Dietary fibre is important for gut health, just as it's important for overall health, and the two things are very tightly intertwined," said co-senior author Carrie Daniel-MacDougall, PhD, associate professor of Epidemiology. "In this study, we saw that dietary fibre also may be important to cancer treatment, which brings us to a point where we can design interventional studies to answer the questions that patients really want to be answered: 'Does what I eat now matter and could it impact my treatment outcome?' We're united in working to find answers for our patients."

**Differences in gut microbiota and pre-clinical models**

The study began with analyzing the gut microbiome profiles of 438 melanoma patients, 321 of whom had the late-stage disease and were treated with systemic therapy, and 293 of whom had an evaluable response to treatment over follow-up. The majority of these patients (87 per cent) received immune checkpoint blockade, most commonly PD-1 inhibitors. A total of 158 patients also completed a

lifestyle survey of antibiotics and probiotics usage; of these, 128 completed a dietary questionnaire as they began immune checkpoint therapy.

The research team reinforced their prior findings, which showed a higher abundance of Ruminococcaceae and Faecalibacterium prausnitzii, well-known and potentially beneficial bacteria involved in the digestion of fibre or starch - in patients who responded to immunotherapy. In contrast to the previous findings, the overall diversity of gut bacteria was not associated with response to immunotherapy, potentially due to the larger size of this patient cohort.

The researchers also tested higher versus lower fibre diets and probiotic use in several preclinical melanoma models to shed light on the potential mechanisms behind the observational findings from the patient cohorts. In multiple models, probiotic use was associated with impaired response to immune checkpoint blockade, larger tumours, lower gut microbiome diversity and less cytotoxic T cells in the tumour microenvironment. A high-fibre diet was associated with slower tumour growth and a significantly higher frequency of CD4+ T cells in pre-clinical models treated with PD-1 inhibitors.



# Covid Vaccine Does Not Increase Preterm Birth Risk: Study

## Press Trust Of India

Covid-19 vaccination during pregnancy is not associated with complications such as preterm birth or smaller than normal weight of babies, according to a study.

The researchers at the Yale University in the US noted that pregnant people who contract Covid-19 have an increased risk of disease severity and death.

One barrier to vaccine acceptance is the concern that vaccination might disrupt pregnancy, they said.

The findings, published on Tuesday in a report by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), is based on more than 40,000 pregnant indi-

viduals.

It shows that Covid-19 vaccination during pregnancy was not associated with preterm birth or small-for-gestational-age (SGA) when comparing vaccinated with unvaccinated pregnant people.

The trimester when the vaccination was received and the number of Covid-19 vaccine doses received were also not associated with increased risk of preterm birth or SGA, the researchers found.

"Getting vaccinated against Covid-19 is important for preventing severe illness in pregnant people," said Heather Lipkind, associate professor at the Yale School of Medicine and lead author of the study.

Preterm birth -- where babies are delivered earlier than 37 weeks -- and SG, in which babies are delivered smaller in size than normal for the gestational age, have been associated with a higher risk for infant death and disability.

The researchers used data from eight health care organisations to investigate the risk for preterm birth or SGA among vaccinated and unvaccinated pregnant women aged 16 to 49 years.

Among those included in the study, 10,064 individuals, or nearly 22 per cent, received at least one Covid-19 vaccine dose during pregnancy, researchers said.

As many as 98.3 per cent re-

ceived vaccination during their second or third trimester while rest received it during their first trimester of pregnancy.

Almost 96 per cent of those vaccinated received an mRNA vaccine developed by Pfizer or Moderna.

The new findings add to the evidence that Covid-19 vaccination is safe during pregnancy, the researchers said.

Research into the drivers behind low vaccine acceptance among pregnant people has found that the most common concerns have been a lack of information about Covid-19 vaccine safety in pregnant people and potential harm to the foetus, they added.

# This TV Remote Uses Radio Waves From Router For Charging

## Agencies

Samsung at the CES 2022 has showcased a new TV remote that uses radio waves from the home router to stay charged.

The company had earlier introduced a solar-powered Eco Remote for its 2021 TVs at the CES event last year.

This year, Samsung has added RF (radio frequency) harvesting capabilities that let the remote preserve its charge by "collecting routers' radio waves and converting them to energy," reports The Verge.

The new Eco Remote can also be

to voltaic energy rather than disposable batteries.

"Supposing that a typical TV is used for around seven years, changing the batteries in its remote just once a year would mean that 14 batteries would get used and thrown out," according to Kwanyoung Kim, a Samsung engineer.

"If we apply that number to Samsung Electronics' expected annual global TV sales, it amounts to approximately 99 million discarded batteries. If we apply it to annual TV sales overall, it adds up to nearly 3.1 billion batteries," the company said last year.



charged from both outdoor and indoor light or over USB-C.

The TV remote "is meant to better complement Samsung's 'lifestyle' TVs like The Frame, Serif, and Sero.

Samsung's Visual Display Business is making its TVs more sustainable by adopting eco-friendly packaging and solar-cell-powered remote controls.

The remote control is made using renewable plastic and powered by pho-

**If we apply that number to Samsung Electronics' expected annual global TV sales, it amounts to approximately 99 million discarded batteries. If we apply it to annual TV sales overall, it adds up to nearly 3.1 billion batteries**



## ‘Demand In Hotel Industry To Be Curtailed In Fy 2021-22 Q4 Due To Fresh Covid Wave’



Press Trust Of India

**NEW DELHI:** The demand in the hotel industry will be curtailed in the fourth quarter this fiscal, at least in January 2022, as the fresh COVID-19 wave with the Omicron variant dampening sentiments, rating agency ICRA said on Thursday.

ICRA said in a statement that with a sharp rise in infections in the last one week and several states imposing partial lockdowns, hoteliers are witnessing cancellations in January 2022 bookings and the enquiries for the next few weeks have come down.

While the situation is evolving, the rating agency said, "Until the end of last month, there was only some cut-down in discretionary business travel. Leisure travel largely remained unaffected in December and no major cancellations were witnessed".

Commenting on the situation, ICRA Assistant Vice-President and Sector Head Vinutaa S said, "With the emergence of the Omicron variant and sharp rise in infections, several states have imposed partial lockdowns. This will curtail travel over the next few weeks. We are witnessing cancellations and hotel enquiries have dropped."

She added that a month of complete lockdown will impact FY2022 pan-India occupancy by

around 4 percentage points.

However, Vinutaa said, "Notwithstanding the potential Omicron impact, we expect a healthy YoY (year-on-year) revenue growth for the hotel industry in FY2022 supported by Q2 and Q3 demand, closing at 50-55 per cent of pre-COVID revenues for the full year."

The net losses are likely to be lower compared to FY21, supported by operating leverage benefits and sustenance of some of the cost-saving initiatives undertaken earlier. Hotels are likely to report pre-COVID margins at 85-90 per cent of revenues going forward, she added.

ICRA said the hotel industry demand had recovered at a sharp pace after the second wave of the pandemic aided by easing restrictions, the high pace of vaccination and pent-up demand. The demand for hotel stays in the last few months has come primarily from 'staycations', weddings, travel to driveable leisure destinations, and special-purpose groups.

It added that biscoctions -- working from a resort -- also saw traction in Q2 and the early part of Q3 FY22. In terms of destinations, the rating agency said leisure destinations like Goa and Jaipur witnessed healthy occupancy, with Goa's occupancy being higher than pre-COVID levels in the last few months.

## Third Wave Of Covid-19 To Pose Risk To Asset Quality Of Banks: ICRA Report

Press Trust Of India

**MUMBAI:** The threat of third wave of COVID-19 poses high risks to banks asset quality, especially the restructured loan book, according to a report by domestic rating agency ICRA. Besides bad loans, lenders are likely to see challenges on profitability and solvency fronts due to the disruption caused by the Omicron variant of coronavirus, the agency said.

It also sees a 15-20-basis point uptick in restructuring requests from the borrowers. The agency's Vice-President (Financial Sector Ratings) Anil Gupta said, "With the increased spread of the new COVID-19 variant, i.e. Omicron, there is a high possibility of the occurrence of a third wave."

He added that a third wave poses a high risk to the performance of the borrowers that were impacted by the previous waves and hence poses a risk to the improving trend of asset quality, profitability and solvency.

Gupta also said banks restructured most of the loans with a moratorium of up to 12 months. "Hence, the restructured book is likely to start exiting the moratorium from Q4 FY2022 and Q1 FY2023," he said. During the two waves of the pandemic, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced Resolution Framework 1.0 and 2.0 to provide relief to the borrowers and banks.

With incremental restructuring under COVID 2.0 scheme, the overall standard restructured loan book for banks increased to 2.9 per cent of standard advances as on September 30, 2021, (two per cent as on



June 30, 2021), the report said.

Most of this restructuring includes borrowers impacted by COVID 1.0 and 2.0. The agency said the restructuring under Covid 1.0 scheme is estimated at 34 per cent (or Rs 1 lakh crore) of the total standard restructured loan book of Rs 2.85 lakh crore for banks as on September 30, 2021.

And, under COVID 2.0, it is estimated to be at 42 per cent or Rs 1.2 lakh crore. The balance comprised micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and other restructuring, it said.

The report added that banks have implemented about 83 per cent of the total requests received under COVID 2.0, leading to an overall restructuring of Rs 1.2 lakh crore of loans till September 30, 2021. "As the restructuring requests can be implemented till December 31, 2021, (under COVID 2.0 scheme), incremental restructuring could increase by 15-20 bps from the current levels," the agency said.

Gupta added that the third wave could revive the demand for the restructuring of loans, including those that were already restructured. "In such a case, visibility on the per-

formance of the restructured loan book, which was earlier expected in FY2023, may now be expected in FY2024 as the moratorium on the existing restructured loans could be extended," he said.

As per ICRA's estimates, 60 per cent of the total restructuring of Rs 1 lakh crore under Covid 1.0 was accounted for by corporates and the balance (or Rs 0.4 lakh crore) by the retail and MSME segments. "Hence, the restructuring under COVID 2.0, which was available for retail and MSME borrowers, stood at 3x of the restructuring under COVID 1.0," it said.

The report said the restructuring also led to the upgradation of accounts, which would have slipped earlier. This, coupled with the large recovery from Dewan Housing Finance Ltd (DHFL) in Q2 FY2022, led to the highest recoveries and upgrades for banks during the past three years.

As a result, despite the elevated gross slippage rate of 3.2 per cent in Q2 FY2022 (3.5 per cent in H1 FY2022 and 2.7 per cent in FY2021), the gross and net non-performing advances (NPAs) remained on a declining trend, it said.

## Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme Saved 13.5 Lakh Firms, 1.5 Crore Jobs: Report

Press Trust Of India

**NEW DELHI:** Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) launched by the government in 2020 to provide relief to MSMEs impacted by COVID-19 pandemic has saved 13.5 lakh firms from going bankrupt and consequently 1.5 crore jobs, claimed a report.

The scheme is the biggest fiscal component of the Rs 20-lakh crore Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan package announced by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in May 2020, to mitigate the distress caused by the COVID-19-induced lockdown by providing credit to different sectors, especially MSMEs.

"We estimate almost 13.5 lakh micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) accounts were saved due to ECLGS (including restructured) Almost 93.7 per cent of such accounts are in the micro and small category," SBI Research said in a report.

In absolute terms, the report claimed MSME loan accounts worth Rs 1.8 lakh crore were saved from slipping into NPA during the period and this is equivalent to 14 per cent of the outstanding MSME credit being saved from becoming NPA.

"As per our analysis, if these units had turned non-performing, then 1.5 crore work-



ers would have become unemployed. In effect, the ECLGS saved the livelihood for 6 crore families (assuming four family members per worker including herself)," it said.

It said that amongst the states, Gujarat has been the biggest beneficiary, followed by Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh.

Under the scheme, 100 per cent guarantee coverage is being provided by the National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company (NCGT) for additional funding of up to Rs 4.5 lakh crore to eligible MSMEs and interested Micro Units Development and Refinance Agency (MUDRA) borrowers in the form of a guaranteed emergency credit line (GECL) facility.

For this purpose, a corpus of Rs 41,600 crore was set up by the government, spread over the current and next three financial years. The report also suggested revamping of the

Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE) for boosting credit flow to the sector.

Interestingly, CGTMSE portfolio have more than 55 per cent recovery rate, low portfolio delinquency, low capital requirement but still an unpopular product, it said, adding, conversely, the non CGTMSE portfolio/ collateralised has a 25 per cent recovery rate, high portfolio delinquency implying much higher loan loss provisions with high capital requirement but still a popular portfolio.

"This could be done by enhancing the scope and role of the current CGTMSE portfolio by setting up an institution that will exclusively administer the CGTMSE along the lines of US Small Business Administration. Given that more than 90 per cent of the units are in the Micro sector, CGTMSE coverage may be made mandatory for all enterprises up to Rs 2 crore," it said.

## Making All Efforts For Increasing Exports From Region: KCC&I

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** The Kashmir Chamber of Commerce & Industry (KCC&I) and India Exim Bank held a virtual meeting regarding Export and Import bank of India.

According to a statement, the meeting was attended by Sheikh Ashiq Ahmad, President, Office Bearers and other members of KCC&I.

In this virtual meeting presentation was given by Virendra Mongia, Regional Head, India Exim Bank regarding Bank's new Initiatives & other programs.

Virendra Mongia briefed about the History and future programme / collaboration of the Bank.

He stated that India Exim Bank established under an act of Parliament is the country's Export Credit Agency, providing Medium and Long-Term (MLT) facilities mainly in Foreign Currency to sovereign governments, parastatal agencies, Indian Exporters / Companies. India Exim Bank offers financing under various programmes to promote exports from the country.

India Exim Bank has taken/is in the process of taking, certain new initiatives towards (i) supporting SMEs and (ii) boosting exports from the country, by a collaborative association with the Indian FIs / Scheduled Commercial Banks (SCBs) / other stakeholders like Export Promotion Councils and Trade & Industry Associations as detailed below:-

Trade Assistance Programme (TAP): India Exim Bank, under this programme, would provide support by offering credit enhancement to trade instruments (Letters of Credit, Bid bond / Performance / Advance Payment Guarantees etc.) to the Public Sector Banks (PSB), by offering transaction-specific partial or full guarantees to cover payment risk of banks in the least developed / developing countries (specifically in Africa,

South America, CIS countries) markets.

Ubharti Sitaare Programme (USP): India Exim Bank has launched the USP to identify and support Indian companies that are future champions with good export potential in order to build globally competitive companies. The identified Indian companies supported under the Programme exhibit a latent advantage by way of a differentiated technology, product or process.

Factoring: The Government of India has recently amended the Factoring Act (the Factoring Regulation (Amendment) Act, 2021). The Act aims to bring in more players in the field of factoring and receivable financing. The Bank is setting-up a Factoring venture. Further, Banks and PSUs have already been mandated by the Government to be registered in Trade Receivables.

Countertrade: Countertrade refers to the exchange of goods and services in whole or part, with other goods and services as payment, rather than with money. Countertrade can be an important mode of international transactions for countries facing currency or payment challenges. It involves trading arrangements between private firms and/or government entities, such as foreign trade organizations, by which the seller is obligated to accept, as a partial or total settlement for his exports of goods (or in some instances services, such as technology or industrial licenses), specified goods or services, from the buyer.

President, Sheikh Ashiq Ahmad stated that the India Exim Bank should organize meetings and physical awareness camps in collaboration with KCC&I in future so that we can encourage young entrepreneurs, women entrepreneurs and all export businesses so that the present poor condition of exports gets improved in coming years.

## CS Reviews Functioning Of Labour And Employment Deptt

Directs Deptt to enhance registrations, timely resolution of labour disputes, and concerted efforts to lower the unemployment rate in J&K

Observer News Service

**JAMMU:** The Chief Secretary, Dr. Arun Kumar Mehta chaired a meeting to review the functioning of the Labour and Employment Department in Jammu and Kashmir.

Commissioner Secretary, Labour & Employment Department, Chief Executive Officer, J&K Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Board, Labour Commissioner, and other officers of the Department attended the meeting.

The Chief Secretary observed that as per the CMIE data, the unemployment rate in Jammu and Kashmir has decreased to 15% in December 2021, and impressed upon the Department to further improve employment avenues in the Union territory.

It was informed that the Labour Department, upon formal registration, provides benefits to building workers, factory workers, migrant contractors, migrant labour, contract labour, shop workers, and boiler workers. The Department also adjudicates cases under the Workmen Com-

pensation Act, Payment of Wages Act, Industrial Dispute Act, Minimum Wages Act, Payment of Gratuity Act; and provides relief to the aggrieved labour.

The Department was asked to boost registrations under various categories of workers by adopting digitized registration processes without human interference, within one month, besides, ensuring early resolution of conflicts through district labour courts through automated court proceedings.

The Department was asked to collaborate with other stakeholders including government departments to identify and register sector-wise eligible workers in a mission mode.

It was informed that the Department has so far registered 10,95,404 workers with 41.50% female and 58.49% male workers engaged in the unorganized sector. The agriculture, construction, household worker, apparel, healthcare, transport, and handicraft sectors continue to see high registration rates followed by tourism, retail, education, and manufacturing.

### SHORT TAKES

### ‘Electric Vehicles Sales In India To Touch 10 Lakh Units This Yr’

**NEW DELHI:** Sales of total electric vehicles in India are expected to be around 10 lakh units this year, equal to what was sold collectively in the last 15 years, mainly riding on the good traction witnessed by electric two-wheelers, Society of Manufacturers of Electric Vehicles (SMEV) said on Thursday.

In 2021, the sales of electric two-wheelers (E2Ws) in the country jumped over two-fold at 2,33,971 units driven by a good traction of high-speed scooters as compared to 1,00,736 units in 2020, SMEV said in a statement.

"We haven't seen better days than the last few months in the entire EV journey. In the last 15 years, we collectively sold around 1 million e2w, e-three wheelers, e-cars, and e-buses, and we will most likely sell the same 1 million units in just one year beginning January 2022," SMEV Director General Sohinder Gill said. (PTI)

### Zupee Announces Strategic Partnership With Reliance Jio

**NEW DELHI:** Zupee, India's largest skill-based casual gaming company, has announced a first-of-its-kind strategic partnership with Jio Platforms Limited. This will entail integration of products and strong synergies in user engagement and distribution in a future-ready ecosystem that will benefit over 450 million users.

With this new synergy, the aim is to build an ecosystem that will facilitate faster and more efficient development and distribution of products and services that will benefit Zupee customers. Jio users will be provided access to Zupee's rich repertoire of online skill-based games as well as other innovative products that Zupee develops. With the new partnership in place, emphasis will be on rolling out more quality games in multiple languages to as many users as possible with the ambition of making Zupee the biggest gaming platform in India connecting India with Bharat.

### CBI Files FIR Against Gujarat Firm For Rs 632 Crore ‘Bank Fraud’

**AHMEDABAD:** The CBI has registered a case against city-based Electrotherm (India) Ltd for allegedly cheating the Bank of India of around Rs 632 crore, officials said on Thursday.

The agency also carried out searches at six locations here.

The firm and its directors are accused of diverting the funds obtained through the credit facilities given by the public sector bank. Following a complaint filed by the bank, the case was registered against Electrotherm (India) Ltd, its director Mukesh Bhanwarlal Bhandari, managing directors Shailesh Bhandari and Avinash Bhandari, and whole-time director Narendra Dalal besides unknown persons, a CBI release said.

The company and people associated with it are accused of causing a loss of Rs 631.97 crore to the bank after availing of various credit facilities between 2012 to 2016, the release added. (PTI)

### Gold Tumbles Rs 284; Silver Plunges Rs 1,292

**NEW DELHI:** Gold price in the national capital on Thursday tumbled Rs 284 to Rs 46,700 per 10 grams in tandem with a decline in international precious metal prices, according to HDFC Securities.

In the previous trade, the precious metal had settled at Rs 46,984 per 10 grams.

Silver also dipped by Rs 1,292 to Rs 59,590 per kilogram from Rs 60,882 per kilogram in the previous trade.

In the international market, gold was trading lower at USD 1,800 per ounce and silver was flat at USD 22.34 per ounce.

"Gold prices traded lower with spot gold prices at COMEX trading half a per cent down at USD 1,800 per ounce on Thursday. Gold prices traded under pressure on hawkish US FED minutes in a view to hike key interest rates sooner-than-expected," according to HDFC Securities, Senior Analyst (Commodities), Tapan Patel. (PTI)

### Sensex, Nifty Snap Four-Day Rally As Hawkish Fed Roils Global Equities

**MUMBAI:** Equity benchmarks lurched lower on Thursday after a four-session winning run, in lockstep with a sharp sell-off in world stocks after minutes of Federal Reserve's recent meeting indicated faster-than-expected rate hikes.

The 30-share BSE Sensex slumped 621.31 points or 1.03 per cent to finish at 59,601.84. Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty plunged 179.35 points or 1 per cent to 17,745.90.

Tech Mahindra was the top laggard in the Sensex pack, shedding 2.56 per cent, followed by UltraTech Cement, Reliance Industries, HCL Tech, HDFC twins, Kotak Bank and Infosys. In value terms, RIL, HDFC twins and Infosys accounted for over half of the benchmark's losses.

In contrast, IndusInd Bank, Bharti Airtel, Maruti, Bajaj Finance and Titan were among the gainers, rising up to 1.74 per cent. (PTI)



# LG Invites Dubai Firms To Invest In J&K

## ‘These Are Those Times In The Journey Of Jammu Kashmir Where Opportunities Are In Plenty’

Observer News Service

**DUBAI:** Today several important MoUs were signed with Al Maya Group, MATU Investments LLC, GL Employment Brokerage LLC & Noon to invest in J&K Expo-2020 Dubai. Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, who presided over the signing ceremony said this will further strengthen J&K-Dubai's trade, investment ties.

The summit has received a great response from the representatives of global companies, investors and business managers. Lieutenant Governor also held a meeting with Chairman of DP world, H.E. Sultan Ahmed Bin Sulayem. DP World is set to build an inland port in Jammu and Kashmir.

Addressing the Investors Summit at Dubai, the Lt Governor highlighted the strong business scenario in Jammu & Kashmir.

Big business groups from UAE have shown interest in investing in J&K marking the beginning of a new and comprehensive partnership, the Lt Governor said.

"Relationship between India and UAE has matured enough over the years to become enduring 'Global Partners' in the 21st Century. These are those times in the journey of Jammu Kashmir where opportunities are in



plenty", observed the Lt Governor.

The Lt Governor said the UT of J&K now has a sage & conducive environment for the businesses to flourish, besides having a young population and a demographic dividend to its advantage.

We are devising new paths, new policies, creating critical infrastructure and unlocking the business potential of Jammu Kashmir to strengthen our business ecosystem for the post-pandemic world and embarking on the journey of growth and development, added the Lt Governor.

"J&K has the capability to provide opportunity to industries to compete, connect and collaborate with its readily available

abundant resources. In the last 28 months, J&K has transformed from sleeping business destination to the land of opportunities & investment", the Lt Governor said.

Due to transparent policies, ease of doing business, we were able to clock investment proposal worth Rs.45,000 Crore & additional Rs.18,300 Crore in real estate sector, added the Lt Governor.

"Jammu Kashmir is rising. The best time to invest in J&K is 'now'. Our performance shows the world has an opportunity to develop and grow with the enormous opportunities Jammu Kashmir offers at this exciting period of time", said the Lt Governor. "I have set the high target of

economic growth for Jammu Kashmir, which is the crown jewel of India. With the ageless culture visible in the layers of history and as a witness to co-existence of almost all major religions known to humankind, Jammu Kashmir has created an inclusive cultural ecosystem for the country" the Lt Governor further added.

This is the new Jammu Kashmir determined to reverse the trend of the past 7 decades by pushing the targets for economic growth. Our aim is very clear-deepen the trust with business firms, build the industrial base for the economy and strengthen social stability. And, the tireless effort is paying us the dividend,

the Lt Governor said.

We are offering you a stake in the present and future of rich civilization, the land of curiosity for intellectuals, travelers, traders and historians, the Lt Governor told the investors & business leaders.

The global pandemic made the world realize the hard way the virtues of globalization, interconnected world. The paradigm shifts towards virtues of connecting and collaborating globally which the business enterprises are witnessing is also an opportunity to invest in unsaturated market, the Lt Governor said.

There is an advantage of first-mover because Jammu Kashmir is an unsaturated market and

one can build a brand new business network and tap rapidly growing opportunities in the Union Territory. I assure you, the government will be a facilitator, partner, provider, collaborator and promoter at every step to ensure sustainable, balanced, progressive and competitive business environment for traditional core sectors and new-age technology driven sectors, added the Lt Governor.

India and United Arab Emirates (UAE) enjoy strong bonds of friendship and historical ties which was further strengthened by the strenuous efforts of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, the Lt Governor said.

Taking this forward, J&K Government is working with enhanced cooperation in various other sectors. For serving the common interests of peoples of both the countries and creating more opportunities for growth and progress, we are also collaborating in setting up small and medium enterprises, educational institutions, space technology, health and closely working in the horticulture sector, added the Lt Governor.

It is my firm belief that the industries will thrive in a progressive business regulatory environment which has now been established

in J&K, said the Lt Governor.

On the occasion, the Lt Governor also expressed his gratitude to the Indian community living in UAE for playing a significant role in the economic development of UAE and immensely contributing to the growth of various sectors in India.

During his meeting with Group Chairman and CEO of DP World, Sultan Ahmed Bin Sulayem and discussed the investment opportunities in various sectors of J&K UT and potential areas of collaboration between the Government of J&K and DP World.

Dubai ports giant DP World is planning to build an inland port in Jammu and Kashmir as part of the firm commitment by the UAE to invest in J&K. The representatives of DP World would soon visit the 250 acre site earmarked for the inland port facility. The ambitious projects will be finalized soon.

The Lieutenant Governor also visited India Pavilion and took a guided tour during the participation of UT of Jammu and Kashmir in the UT floor of the pavilion.

Pertinently, the Lt Governor during his visit to Dubai is holding a series of meetings with potential investors for bringing investment in J&K, besides promoting J&K products at Gulf market.

## CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

### Dubai's DP

commitment" by state-owned DP World.

A DP World spokesperson said the company had a "productive meeting" with Sinha on Thursday and that it was preparing a proposal for the project.

The announcement last October that Dubai would invest in the region was the first by any foreign government since Kashmir's autonomy was revoked in 2019 and the Muslim-majority state was divided into two territories directly ruled by New Delhi.

It is not clear where the port will be established but "Gulf Business" quoting DP World reported recently that discussions took place for a potential 'multi-modal' logistics park and hub in Jammu comprising warehouses and storage to "encourage inter-modal transfer of containers, bulk and break-bulk cargo."

Emirati newspaper Khaleej Times reported this week that Dubai developer Emaar Properties would build a mall in Srinagar.

Lulu Group, an UAE-headquartered company headed by an Indian billionaire, also plans to set up a food processing hub in Kashmir.

But investment in the heavily militarised Jammu and Kashmir is fraught with risk. There are frequent attacks by militants, while the Indian government has at times faced international criticism for widespread crackdowns there by security forces.

"As far militancy is concerned, we are dealing with it ... and I can assure it will be dealt (with) fully" said Sinha, who insisted the region was a safe place for foreign investment.

"UAE is a launching pad for Jammu and Kashmir and its products to enter other Arab countries and also the rest of the world. With the coming up of an inland port by DP world, our freight problems will be solved and Kashmir's products will reach the world markets. Our farmers will benefit with the production unit. We are going to have a sea change in Kashmir," Sinhas was quoted as saying by the Khaleej Times.

Asked when the mall and the port will materialise, Sinha said: "There is no delay from our side. It is in our interest that projects kickstart at the earliest and we are facilitating it."

He said the government is issuing permissions through a single-window system within 30 days.

"The land acquisition has been made easier through a landmark judgement. Our electricity is cheaper than any other state. We are also offering incentives on return of investments for businesses," he said.

### LG Talks Business

cargo logistics, port terminal operations, maritime services, and free trade zones.

The India Pavilion at EXPO2020 Dubai is currently hosting the Jammu & Kashmir Week from 3rd to 13th January 2022, he said.

### Lulu Group To

during the MoU signing ceremony held in Dubai on Thursday. The MoU was signed by Ranjan Prakash Thakur, principal secretary (industries and commerce), Government of Jammu & Kashmir; and Ashraf Ali MA, executive director of Lulu Group. Manoj Sinha, who is on a three-day official visit to the UAE, also inaugurated 'Kashmir Promotion Week' at Lulu Hypermarket, Silicon Central Mall.

Sinha termed it as a "historic

agreement" and said the trade between Jammu & Kashmir and Dubai has remained steady and it reflects the resilience of the deep economic linkages.

"Relations between India and the UAE are long-standing and deep-rooted. People-to-people contact and trade have seen momentum in the recent years under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi," the lieutenant governor said.

The week-long promotion will highlight Kashmiri fruits, vegetables, Saffron, dry fruits, pulses, handicrafts and other specialty products.

Yusuffali MA said: "In the first phase, we will be investing Rs 200 crore; and subsequently, another Rs 200 crore has been earmarked for further expansion."

"Setting up of a Lulu Hypermarket is also in the plan. I am sure these projects will not only give considerable employment opportunities to the local youth but also benefit the agri sector and farmers immensely," he added.

Last month, the Lulu group announced an investment of Rs 2,000 crore near Ahmedabad to set up a modern shopping mall.

It also announced an investment of Rs 500 crore to set up a food processing plant in Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh.

The company will set up 100 per cent export-oriented food and agri-produce processing park in Greater Noida.

In India, the Lulu group already has four operational shopping malls at Kochi, Thrissur, Trivandrum and Bengaluru.

The mall at Bengaluru is not owned by the Lulu group but it is managing and operating the property.

The Lulu group currently has 220 hypermarkets and shopping malls in the Middle East, Egypt, India, Malaysia and Indonesia with a global workforce of over 57,000 employees.

The world-famous GI-tagged saffron has been launched at Lulu Hypermarket, which is a major step towards boosting the Jammu & Kashmir-Dubai partnership, Sinha said.

He added that the Lulu group is already importing apples from Jammu & Kashmir and with saffron, "we are adding Kashmir's finest spice to the basket".

The group's business portfolio ranges from hypermarket operations to shopping mall development, manufacturing and trading of goods, food processing plants, wholesale distribution, hospitality assets, and real estate development.

### Gunfight Rages

government forces in south Kashmir's Pulwama district, police had said.

In the last six days since New Year, police have claimed to have killed seven militants, including two Pakistani nationals in a series of gun-battles in the Valley.

### Met Predicts

snow/rain spell of moderate to heavy intensity till January 8. Heavy snow is expected at some places during the period as well, it said.

Kashmir valley is currently under the grip of the 40-day harshest winter period known as 'Chilla-i-Kalan' which began on December 21.

'Chilleh Kalan' is a period when a cold wave grips the region and the temperature drops considerably leading to the freezing of water bodies including the famous Dal Lake here as

well as the water supply lines in several parts of the valley.

The chances of snowfall are the most frequent and maximum during this period and most areas, especially in the higher reaches, receive heavy to very heavy snowfall.

The 'Chilleh Kalan' will end on January 31, but the cold wave continues even after that in Kashmir with a 30-day-long chilly period.

### Banihal Highway

mudslides and shooting stones near Cafeteria morh and Chanderkote in Ramban district. The officials said that the traffic would be allowed on both sides provided weather was fair and road conditions were better tomorrow.

"Subject to fair weather and better road condition, LMVs (passenger) shall be allowed from both sides on Jammu-Srinagar highway viz Jammu towards Srinagar and vice-versa," a traffic department official said in a statement.

However he said, commuters are advised not to travel on the highway without confirming the status of road from TCU Jammu/ Ramban and Srinagar in view of inclement weather prediction issued by MeT department.

The highway was closed yesterday due to landslides, mudslides and shooting stones at several places along the 270-km stretch especially in Ramban district, officials said.

Meanwhile, the official said, Mughal road, which connects Shopian with Poonch-Rajouri districts, Srinagar-Leh highway and Sinthan road, connecting Anantnag and Kishtwar districts, shall remain closed due to snow accumulation.

### Former J&K

re-think over the downsizing of the SSG as some experts within the police force feel that this may hamper the preparedness of the elite unit.

The SSG will now be entrusted with the security of serving chief ministers and their immediate family members.

The decision will entail the withdrawal of the security cover of Farooq Abdullah, Ghulam Nabi Azad and two other former chief ministers Omar Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti at a time when a number of militancy related incidents have taken place in Srinagar.

All these former chief ministers except Azad reside in Srinagar.

However, Farooq Abdullah and Azad will continue to be provided the security cover of the National Security Guard, also known as Black cat commandoes, as both of them are Z-plus protectees.

Omar Abdullah and Mehbooba will continue to have Z-plus security cover while in Jammu and Kashmir, but are likely to have reduced security outside the union territory.

The leaders will be provided security by the district police as well as the security wing based on the threat assessment, the officials said.

Some of the SSG personnel would be posted with the security wing of the Jammu and Kashmir Police for "close protection team", they said.

The officials said the remaining SSG personnel are likely to be posted to other wings so that the police force can make the best use of their training and knowledge.

Vehicles and other gadgets will be transferred to the security wing of the Jammu and Kashmir Police.

### Omicron Surge:

Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand,

Mizoram, Meghalaya, Jammu and Kashmir and Bihar, Additional Secretary of Union Health Ministry Arti Ahuja pointed out a considerable decline in COVID-19 testing amid rising cases and positivity rate and said it is a "cause of concern".

In the absence of sufficient testing, it is rather impossible to determine the true level of infection spread in the community, Ahuja said in her letter dated January 5.

"With the increased detection of the Variant of Concern (VOC), Omicron, and a majority of countries seeing multiple surges in cases despite high levels of vaccination, there is a need for continued vigil and efforts to prevent any deterioration of the COVID-19 scenario.

"Keeping in mind the unpredictable and highly transmissible behaviour of Omicron and the larger preponderance of asymptomatic cases, ramping up testing in the initial days itself will help to ensure that the infected individual does not spread the virus to others," she said.

It has been observed that there has been a considerable decline in COVID-19 testing in these states and union territories amid rising cases and positivity, which is a cause of concern, Ahuja said.

She advised them to review and ensure availability of sufficient stock of testing reagents and kits etc., and regular arrangement of testing facilities, consumables, and logistics.

India on Thursday saw the biggest single-day jump of 495 Omicron cases, taking the total number of infections of the new variant of coronavirus to 2,630, according to Union health ministry data.

### 349 More Test

pandemic in J&K to 342768. In the Valley, officials said that Srinagar reported the highest 80 new cases of virus, Baramulla 21, Budgam 16, Pulwama and Bandipora 9 each, Kupwara 6, Ganderbal 5 and Shopian 1. The twin districts of Anantnag and Kulgam registered no new cases of virus.

In the winter capital, officials said, Jammu reported a maximum of 119 new cases of virus, Reasi 33, Udhampur 14, Poonch 13, Rajouri 8, Doda and Kathua 7 each, Kishtwar 4, Samba 2 and Ramban 1.

"Moreover, 116 Covid-19 patients recovered during the time, 32 from Jammu Division and 84 from Kashmir," the officials said.

Also, they said that three more people succumbed to Covid-19 related complications, two from Jammu and one from Kashmir, during the last 24 hours, they said. So far 4533 persons—2201 in Jammu and 2332 in Kashmir—have died due to the virus, they said.

### JCB Ferries Pregnant

light motor vehicles on phone, however, the family was reluctant as they were aware that light motor vehicles won't reach due to heavy accumulation of snow on the road.

"Whenever we found that no other option would work, contractor Javid Ahmad contacted JCB driver Aarif Ahmad Sheikh of Gorinad Verinag at around 4 am," they said.

Officials said without wasting any time, Aarif along with JCB reached Trajan and took the pregnant lady to nearby hospital in Qamar area of Verinag from where she was shifted to MCH Anantnag.

Aarif said that there was heavy snow on the road and without a JCB, no other option would have worked in such a situation.

"We covered around 15 kilometers while a pregnant lady and a few people sat near the driver's seat and his relative in a bucket of the JCB to reach the hospital," he said.

Aarif said that whenever such conditions arise, he is ready to take risks and evacuate patients of his area to hospital.

Peer Mohammad Sultan, assistant executive engineer PMGSY Anantnag said that snow clearance always remains a challenging task and they always try to clear the road as soon as possible.

He said that on the intervening night of 5-6 January, the department received a call from Trajan and accordingly arrangements with the help of contractor Javid Ahmad were made and the lady was safely evacuated to hospital.

Officials said that the lady is fine and has given birth to a healthy baby.

### Hot Snow- Eastern

first incident of firing at the LAC in 45 years.

Two days after images of Chinese activity in Ladakh surfaced, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on Thursday said India was closely monitoring Chinese activity. However it said the bridge is being constructed in areas that have been under Chinese illegal occupation for around 60 years.

"Regarding reports of a bridge being made by China on Pangong Lake, Gol monitoring this closely. This bridge is being constructed in areas that have been under illegal occupation by China for around 60 years," MEA official spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said, according to ANI.

The MEA official spokesperson said the Indian government is taking all necessary steps to ensure "our security interests" are fully protected.

Many in the Indian establishment see Chinese Galwan video and now satellite images of new construction activity as part of Beijing's psychological warfare. Interestingly, the latest Chinese provocation came days after Beijing came up with its own names for over a dozen places in Arunachal Pradesh.

It is noteworthy that this is the second straight winter when India and China have deployed their troops at the front lines in the freezing Ladakh sector.

China is reportedly maintaining around 60,000 military personnel across the LAC in Eastern Ladakh during extreme winters for the first time in decades forcing India to deploy a similar number of troops there to preempt any Chinese 'misadventure'.

With military level talks for disengagement and de-escalation deadlocked chances of military escalation have only grown stronger. A statement issued by India after the last talks had noted "the Indian side...made constructive suggestions for resolving the remaining areas but the Chinese side was not agreeable and also could not provide any forward-looking proposals".

These tactics adopted by China, coupled with mounting evidence of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) beefing up infrastructure, roads, bridges, helipads, dual-use airports and missile and air defence positions on its side in Ladakh sector, has forced the Indian security establishment to conclude

that the Chinese side is not serious about the negotiations. And in absence of negotiations and continued Chinese provocations the situation in eastern Ladakh is only getting murkier.

### Festive Footfall

the much hyped four-wheeler which skidded off the track lately and plunged into the gorge.

"Nothing like the new Thar to get up to Gulmarg in the snow," Omar posted his Gulmarg pictures with the caption. "An evening walk in the snow certainly gets the blood pumping."

Among the other prominent personalities in Gulmarg right now is former NDTV journalist Nidhi Razdan. She changed her display picture on Twitter to snow-capped Gulmarg in the backdrop, suggesting she has found it difficult to resist the lovely Gulmarg weather.

### Rajnath Warns

with it. But strangely our neighbour does not desist from its mischievous activities in Jammu and Kashmir. However, I can assure you it will have to," Singh said at a party rally in Uttarkashi, referring to former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's visit.

"It wants to keep the question of Jammu and Kashmir alive," he said.

Singh said by demolishing terror camps on Pakistan territory through surgical and airstrikes, Indian troops gave a message to the entire world that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi it was a strong India capable of giving a befitting reply to Pakistan even on its own turf.

Describing the BJP as a party that does not compromise on its ideology, the Union minister said under the leadership of Syama Prasad Mookerjee the Jana Sangh in 1951 promised to abolish article 370.

"We came to power and we have done it. When we promised to build a Ram temple in Ayodhya, the Congress did not believe it. Isn't a grand Ram temple being built in Ayodhya today?" Singh said.

"The BJP does what it says," Singh said.

### Soldier Found

begun into his death, they said.

### Guard Foils

it to police. He was injured in a scuffle with Burglars and is 'stable' now after treatment, he said.

An FIR has been launched in this regard at police station Budgam and further investigation has been launched, he added. (KDC)

### 4 Persons Held

Mohd Yousaf and Mohd Tazeem son of Fazal Din, all residents of Mendhar Poonch were arrested for killing a peacock with 12 bore gun at village Karkoi in Akhnoor. "A Xylo car with a gun along with the dead peacock was seized from the site", they said.

SDPO Akhnoor Varun Jandyal confirming the arrests said that a case FIR No. 6/2022 under section 9/51 of Wildlife Act read with 3/25 of Arms Act and 429/34 IPC has been registered at police station Akhnoor. "The case was initiated after receiving a complaint from the Wildlife Department", the officer said. (GNS)

### Gas Gun Recovered

number IN-NEL-17-N/01-00326-38 MM, Made in India (Narindera Explosive Limited) at Gagoo in Humhama area.

"The firearm was taken in seizure under section 102 CrPC", the officer said.



## Advisor Khan Reviews CAPEX Budget of YSS, Sports Council

Govt committed to provide world-class sports infrastructure in J&K: Advisor



Observer News Service

**JAMMU:** Advisor to LG, Farooq Khan on Thursday chaired a meeting to review the CAPEX Budget for 2021-22 of Youth Services & Sports Department and J&K Sports Council.

The meeting in detail discussed the physical and financial status of various projects including mega projects being executed in Jammu and Kashmir.

The meeting was attended by Principal Secretary Youth Services & Sports, Alok Kumar; Director Youth Services and Sports Department, Gazanfar Ali; Secretary J&K Sports Council, Nuzhat Gul, and other concerned.

Advisor Khan held detailed deliberations on various important issues regarding the overall development of sports activities as well as infrastructure.

He called upon the concerned to push their respective teams for the completion of all the projects within given timelines and urged them to maintain the balance of physical and financial achievements.

On the occasion, separate presentations were given wherein the status of the various ongoing and new works of the twin departments with respect to the development of sports infrastructure was provided.

Under CAPEX Budget head for YSS Department, the meeting was informed that for ongoing works, Rs 607.28 lakh was released, of which Rs 161.31 has been expended. Similarly, for new works Rs 1334.38 lakh were released, out of

which Rs 205.08 lakh has been incurred under CAPEX Budget. Further, out of 68 ongoing projects, 34 have been completed while as out of 101 new works nine have been completed.

Likewise, for JK Sports Council, it was given out that Rs 97.88 Crore were allocated for different works and Rs 55 crore have been released for both the Ongoing and New works which include 41 (Ongoing works) and 262 (New works).

The meeting also discussed the status of works being executed by Sports Council at KK Haku Stadium and Bakhshi Stadium. Besides, the status of the upgradation of parade football ground including the pavilion and other arena facilities.

Speaking on the occasion, Advisor Farooq Khan impressed upon the concerned officers to issue all the tenders immediately after the completion of formalities so that the remaining works would be finished at the earliest.

While stressing upon the importance of improved and world-class sports infrastructure in the region, he exhorted upon the concerned to ensure timely completion of all the sports projects on time.

While appreciating the work done of the two departments in the development of sports infrastructure in J&K, the Advisor reaffirmed that the government is committed to provide world-class sports infrastructure as various mega projects are nearing completion and those would be dedicated to people soon.

## KP Premier League Delegation Calls On Advisor Khan

Observer News Service

**JAMMU:** A delegation of Kashmiri Pandit Premier League called on Advisor to Lieutenant Governor, Farooq Khan on Thursday and submitted a charter of demands.

The delegation led by President J&K Forum for Peace and Reconciliation, Vinay Thusoos comprised of Vice president IQWAAT Sports organisation, Ankur Bagati and President and founder of Rising Athlete of J&K, Sahil Pandita.

Advisor assured the delegation that Jagti Township, Migrant camp Purkhoo and Migrant camp Muthi will be provided with state of the art sports facilities soon.

Advisor Khan lauded the efforts of members of the league (KPPL) towards promotion of sports in J&K. He affirmed com-

mitment of the government to engage more and more youth in sports activities so that their energies are channelized in the right direction.



Dr. Vinay Thusoos expressed gratitude to Advisor Khan for taking keen interest in redressal of their issues and concerns.

It is pertinent to mention here that the second edition of annual KPPL, in which 450 players participated from J&K including 60 players from rest of the country, was held from 5th December to 22nd December 2021.

## Djokovic In Limbo As He Fights Deportation From Australia

Serbian Prez blasts "harassment" of star tennis player who was detained overnight

Agencies

**BRISBANE:** Locked in a dispute over his COVID-19 vaccination status, Novak Djokovic was confined to an immigration detention hotel in Australia on Thursday as the No. 1 men's tennis player in the world awaited a court ruling on whether he can compete in the Australian Open later this month.

Djokovic, a vocal skeptic of vaccines, had travelled to Australia after Victoria state authorities granted him an exemption to the country's strict vaccination rules. But when he arrived late Wednesday, the Australian Border Force rejected his exemption as invalid and barred him from entering the country.

A court hearing on his bid to stave off deportation was set for Monday, while the 34-year-old Serbian and defending Australian Open champion was forced to wait it out in Melbourne at a secure hotel used by immigration officials to house asylum seekers and refugees.

The tournament begins on Jan. 17.

Djokovic's bid to get around the vaccine requirements so that he could play has caused an uproar and triggered allegations of special treatment in Australia, where people spent months in lockdown and endured harsh travel restrictions at the height of the pandemic.

After his long-haul flight, Djokovic spent the night trying to convince authorities he had the necessary documentation, to no avail.

"The rule is very clear," Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison said. "You need to have a medical exemption. He didn't have a valid medical exemption. We make the call at the border, and that's where it's enforced."



Health Minister Greg Hunt said the athlete's visa was cancelled after border officials reviewed Djokovic's medical exemption and looked at "the integrity and the evidence behind it."

While Djokovic has spoken out against vaccines, he has steadfastly refused to say whether he has gotten any shots against the coronavirus, though it is widely presumed he would not have sought an exemption if he had been vaccinated.

Federal Circuit Judge Anthony Kelly adjourned Djokovic's case to Monday. A lawyer for the government agreed the nine-time Australian Open champion and winner of 20 major titles should not be deported before then.

"I feel terrible since yesterday that they are keeping him as a prisoner. It's not fair. It's not human. I hope that he will win," Djokovic's mother, Dijana, said after speaking with him briefly by telephone from Belgrade.

She added: "Terrible, terrible accommodation. It's just some small immigration hotel, if it's hotel at all."

Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic said that he had spoken to Djokovic and that his government asked that the athlete be allowed to move to a house he

has rented and "not to be in that infamous hotel."

He added that Djokovic has been treated differently from other players.

"I'm afraid that this overkill will continue," Vucic said. "When you can't beat someone, then you do such things."

Asked about the confusion in Djokovic's case, Morrison said the onus is on the traveller to have the proper documentation on arrival.

Anyone who does that, he said, "whether they're a celebrity, a politician, a tennis player ... they can expect to be asked questions more than others before you come."

Acceptable reasons for an exemption include major medical conditions and serious reactions to a previous dose of the COVID-19 vaccine.

Evidence of a COVID-19 infection within the previous six months has also been widely reported to be grounds for an exemption, but that appears to be a matter of dispute between federal and state authorities.

Djokovic tested positive for the coronavirus in June 2020 after he played in a series of exhibition matches that he organized without social distancing amid the pandemic. (AP)

## Usman Khawaja Century Lifts Australia In 4th Ashes Test



Agencies

**SYDNEY:** Usman Khawaja's ninth Test century lifted Australia to an imposing 416-8 declared before England's openers survived a nervous five overs to be 13 without loss at the end of the second day of the fourth Ashes Test.

Playing his first Test since 2019 and only in the team because of Travis Head's positive test for COVID-19, Khawaja made the most of the opportunity as he first shared a century partnership with Steve Smith and then anchored Australia's innings with his 137 from 260 balls after England's bowlers fought back with the second new ball on Thursday.

"I've put a lot of hard work in," Khawaja said.

"A lot of time behind the scenes that people don't see. You never take anything for granted, never sure I was going to represent Australia again, never mind scoring a hundred. I'm very grateful for another opportunity."

Stuart Broad took 5-101 and went a long way to vindicating his return to the team after being omitted from the third Test at Melbourne that saw Australia humiliate England and retain the Ashes.

At stumps, Haseeb Hameed and Zak Crawley were both on 2 not out, with the latter surviving being caught off a no-ball from Mitchell Starc as the tourists ended the day 403 runs behind Australia in the first innings.

Earlier, Khawaja completed his century from 201 balls with 11 boundaries in the final over before tea in front of his former home state crowd. He celebrated by holding both arms aloft, raising and pointing his bat toward his team and family members in the historic Members Stand at the Sydney Cricket Ground before embracing his skipper mid-pitch.

Khawaja, who also passed 3,000 test runs in this innings, was eventually bowled by Broad after close to seven hours at the crease and left to a standing ovation from the near 25,000 crowd at the venue he made his debut 11 years ago.

"It's my home ground here, the people still treat me like a local boy," Khawaja said.

"It was probably the most touching, humbling experience getting that hundred here today. It's stuff you dream of."

"I've broken down a lot of barriers to get to where I've got to now and I think people respect that."

He had one reprieve, on 30, when he was dropped by Root off Jack Leach's bowling but it was a rare blemish in what was a masterful second century against England at the SCG.

England will rue that missed opportunity as the tourists pace bowlers performed well, especially with the second new ball and picked up wickets quickly in the afternoon to pull back into the contest. (AP)

## CA Set To Relocate COVID-Affected BBL To Melbourne



Agencies

**MELBOURNE:** In its bid to complete the tournament at any cost, a desperate Cricket Australia is set to gradually shift the COVID-hit Big Bash League to Melbourne to avoid any further interruptions.

The decision was revealed by CA CEO Nick Hockley, who said that they are planning to relocate all eight teams inside a bio-bubble in Melbourne as it will make it easier for the organisers to reschedule the fixtures in the event of postponement of matches due to any further COVID positive cases.

The BBL has witnessed an unprecedented COVID outbreak with numerous positive cases being reported across eight franchises, forcing postponement and last minute rescheduling of matches.

"What we're dealing with is unprecedented," Hockley told Australia's SEN Radio.

"We'll be gradually centralising (the teams) into Melbourne."

"What that enables us (Cricket Australia) to do is if a team is significantly impacted, it gives us much more flexibility to be able to swap teams in and complete the fixture," he added.

Out of the eight teams, Melbourne Stars and Brisbane Heat have been affected the most by the outbreak as the Stars were forced to play two games in as many days with second rung players.

"Those two particular clubs (Stars and Heat) have been heavily impacted," Hockley said.

"We've faced some different timing challenges with test results coming back. It's not ideal. Obviously, we want everyone to have their full-strength team available."

## Leadership Change At Struggling Man United With New CEO

Agencies

**LONDON:** Manchester United appointed a new chief executive on Thursday in the latest step by the fallen English Premier League giant to regain its elite playing status and restore stability.

Richard Arnold has been promoted from group managing director to CEO, the top leadership role below members of the owning Glazer family.

Arnold assumes the responsibilities of Ed Woodward, who leaves on Feb. 1 having initially announced his departure last April amid the furor over United's attempt to join the short-lived, ill-fated European Super League with five other English clubs.

"We are now looking forward to Richard and his leadership team opening a new phase in the club's evolution," co-chairman Joel Glazer said in a statement, "with ambitious plans for investment in Old Trafford, the strengthen-



ing of our engagement with fans, and continued drive towards our most important objective - winning on the pitch."

Woodward had served as executive vice chairman since 2013 - the year United's decline began with the retirement of Alex Ferguson as manager after 26 years and the Premier League trophy being won for a 13th and final time by the Scot.

The record 20-time English champions haven't won the league since then. The club, listed on the New York Stock Ex-

change, hasn't won any trophy since Jose Mourinho delivered the Europa League title in 2017. His successor, Ole Gunnar Solskjaer, was fired in December and Ralf Rangnick installed as interim manager until the end of the season.

Halfway through the season, United is in seventh place - 22 points behind neighbour Manchester City.

While City has won five Premier Leagues in a decade, United has been in decline on the pitch while continuing to be the Pre-

mier League's biggest money-maker - last season generating 494.1 million pounds (then \$681 million).

The 50-year-old Arnold has been at United since 2007 having previously worked at Price-waterhouseCoopers where he met Woodward.

Arnold engineered with Woodward the growth of United's commercial operations that helped to cover the cost of the debt the club was burdened with after the 2005 takeover by the Glazers. They also oversaw a challenging period of squad rebuilding required after Ferguson and then-CEO David Gill stepped down in 2013.

More than \$1 billion has been spent since then on new players. A more structured decision-making process has been put in place recently with John Murrough as football director alongside former United midfielder Darren Fletcher as a technical director.

## S. Africa Beat India By 7 Wickets In 2nd Test, Level Series

Press Trust of India

**JOHANNESBURG:** South Africa defeated India by seven wickets in the second Test to level the three-match series 1-1 here on Thursday.

After two sessions were lost to incessant rain, South Africa, chasing 240, came out needing 122 runs for a memorable win with eight wickets in hand.

Skipper Dean Elgar led from the front with an unbeaten 96 off 188 balls to take his team home in 67.4 overs.

The other crucial contributions came from Aiden Markram (31), Rassie van der Dussen (40), Keegan Peterson (28) and Temba Bavuma (23 not out off 45).

India's bowlers could not extract enough from the surface



with Mohammad Shami getting the only wicket to fall on the day.

The third and final Test begins in Cape Town from January 11.

**Brief Scores:**

India 202 and 266.  
South Africa 202 and 243/3 in 67.4 overs. (Dean Elgar 96 not out, Rassie van der Dussen 40; Mohammad Shami 1/55).

## COVID Outbreak At Man City; 4 Serie A Games Scrapped

Agencies

A coronavirus outbreak at Manchester City put manager Pep Guardiola and seven players in isolation while four Serie A teams were ordered into quarantine and unable to play matches on Thursday.

City indicated it still plans to play its FA Cup match on Friday against Swindon with assistant coach Rodolfo Borrell stepping in after Guardiola tested positive.

The English Premier League champions said Guardiola was among 14 backroom staff and seven first-team players "isolating for COVID-related reasons." An unvaccinated close contact of an infected person also has to isolate in England, but details were not provided.

Burnley manager Sean Dyche tested positive and will miss the team's FA Cup game this weekend against Huddersfield.

Burnley has played the fewest games in the Premier League

after three of its matches were called off because of outbreaks in opponents' squads and another due to snow.

**ITALY**

At least four of the 10 Serie A matches scheduled for Thursday won't be played after local health authorities ordered teams into quarantine amid rising coronavirus cases.

Inter Milan showed up at Bologna's Dall'Ara stadium for its game despite knowing it wouldn't be played due to the host team having eight players test positive. Inter's players warmed up for the game then retreated to the changing room and showered before the referee called off the match after 45 minutes of waiting for Bologna to show up - or not show up.

The quarantine orders came from authorities in Bologna, Turin, Udine and Salerno.

Torino has six players positive plus two staff members, pre-

venting it playing at Atalanta. Udinese was due to play Fiorentina but has seven players positive along with two staff members. Salernitana, which was due to host Venezia, has nine players and two staff members positive.

Napoli's match at Juventus is still scheduled to go ahead despite Napoli reporting seven players positive and three staff members, including coach Luciano Spalletti.

The league said if squads have 13 players available, including at least one goalkeeper, then they should play. In all, more than 70 players in the league are positive.

**FRANCE**

The French league game between defending champion Lille and Lorient scheduled for Saturday was postponed because of a high number of positive tests in the Lorient squad.

The league did not specify how many Lorient players have COVID-19 but sports daily L'Equipe's website said it was 12.



## Investigate If PM's Rally Cancelled Due To Security Lapse Or Farmers' Anger: Rakesh Tikait

Agenceis

Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) leader Rakesh Tikait has called for an investigation to confirm if there was a lapse in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's security in Punjab due to which his programme was changed or it was because of the anger of farmers.

Tikait's BKU has been part of the farmers' collective Samyukta Kisan Morcha which spearheaded the anti-farm laws campaign against the Centre for a year until Modi announced in November 2021 that the legislations would be repealed.

The BKU national spokesperson, who was encamped at Delhi border for over a year, is currently in his hometown of Muzaffarnagar in western Uttar Pradesh.

PM Modi was in Punjab on Wednesday to attend a public rally. He had landed in Bathinda and had to take the road route to Hussainiwala in Ferozepur because of inclement weather.

However, he was stuck on a flyover for 15-20 minutes due to a blockade by some protesters, an incident the Union Home Ministry described as a "major lapse" in his security.

Punjab Chief Minister Charan-



"While those in the BJP are saying that the rally was cancelled due to a lapse in security of the prime minister, the Punjab chief minister is claiming that the PM returned because of empty chairs at the rally.

"Now it is necessary to investigate whether there is a lapse in the security or the anger of the farmers!" Tikait tweeted in Hindi on Wednesday.

## 125 Passengers On Flight From Italy Test COVID Positive in Amritsar



Agenceis

A total of 125 passengers on a Milan-Amritsar charter flight were found to be COVID-19 positive when tested on arrival, government officials said on Thursday. Officials said there were a total of 179 passengers on the charter flight YU-661 that landed at the Amritsar airport at around 1.30pm on Wednesday.

Since Italy is one of the "at risk" countries according to the

Union health ministry, all eligible passengers —160 in this case— were tested for COVID-19 and 125 of them were found to be positive, they mentioned.

Out of total 179 passengers, 19 were children or infants so they were exempt from on-arrival RT-PCR testing, they said.

The charter flight between Milan in Italy and Amritsar in Punjab was operated by Portuguese company EuroAtlantic Airways, they mentioned.

## At 15,097 Fresh Covid Cases, Delhi Sees 41% Rise In A Day



Delhi on Thursday reported 15,097 fresh Covid-19 cases, a significant rise of 41 per cent from the previous day. This is the highest single-day rise after May 8 when the tally was at 17,364. The new cases have pushed the total infection tally to 14,89,463 in the city.

Total 6 Covid deaths have been reported in the last 24 hours, pushing the death toll to 25,127.

Meanwhile, the Covid infection in the city has climbed at 15.34 per cent, highest in last eight months. According to the Delhi Health department, the

city had recorded 17.02 per cent positivity rate on May 12.

The number of active Covid cases has jumped at 31,498 highest since May 21. According to the Health Department, Delhi had recorded the highest 35,683 active Covid cases on that day.

With a 96.19 per cent Covid recovery rate, the active Covid case rate in Delhi has gone up to 2.11 per cent and the death rate continues at 1.69 per cent.

With 2,239 patients recovering in the last 24 hours, the total number of recoveries has gone to 14,25,938. A total of 11,551

Covid patients are being treated in home isolation at present.

The number of Covid containment zones has risen to 5,168.

Meanwhile, a total of 98,434 new tests -- 80,051 RT-PCR and 18,383 Rapid Antigen - were conducted in the last 24 hours, taking the total to 3,31,86,347.

Out of 1,41,498 vaccines administered in the last 24 hours, 89,945 were first doses and 51,553 second doses. The total number of cumulative beneficiaries vaccinated so far stands at 2,69,97,543 according to the health bulletin.

## Don't Let Your Guard Down Thinking Omicron Is Mild Infection, Warns AIIMS Expert

Agenceis

New Delhi: Dr PS Chandra, Professor, Neurosurgery, AIIMS in Delhi said that the COVID-19 cases which are rising exponentially now in the country will start declining in a few weeks, but caution is important and we should prepare for the worst while hoping for the best.

"There are reasons to believe that this will be over within weeks. As it has happened in Africa and South Africa hardly has any cases as of now numbers are reducing. So these are the silver lining but again, we have to be cautious for a couple of reasons. First, it is very, very infectious. So obviously you know we should not let our guard down. So continue masking, continue social distancing, then continue working from home. Avoid any kind of unnecessary travel, avoid any kind of unnecessary gathering, public gathering is to be completely discouraged. So all these things have to be continued," said Dr Chandra while speaking to ANI.

He further said the Omicron virus is highly infectious and it is going to increase the herd immunity.

"There are certain silver lining to it, and we should go forward with a sense of caution. And our strategy should be that we prepare for the worst and hope for the best. A large number of people are asymptomatic, which is good in a way because it's likely to increase the herd



immunity, so more people, you know, get infected and they're completely asymptomatic. Obviously, it's going to form that immunological barrier to prevent the further stretch and again, lastly, but not the least, because it's highly infectious," he said.

Dr Chandra showed concern over hospitalization and emphasized taking precautions.

"The second concern we have is that because we have a huge population. So even if one per cent of the population would require hospitalization that would be a huge number. We don't want our hospital infrastructure to collapse. And from that perspective, it becomes the responsibility of each and every citizen. They should not let their guard down saying that it's only a mild infection. So they have to be careful not just for themselves, but also for the entire community. You do not want to increase the burden on the com-

munity. So that all our hospital beds are clogged," he added.

He further said that most resident doctors in his team are sick and if healthcare workers get sick in a large numbers then that can lead to trouble for the whole system.

"We have to protect our healthcare workers. They have to take full precautions because they are the soldiers on the frontline. So if they are going to fall down who's going to take care of all the patients. So for instance, in my unit you know, almost 50 per cent of the residents are sick. They're all having mild symptoms, they're doing well. But the fact is, they have not been able to report for work. So that's very, very crucial that the healthcare workers must be protected, not just for their own sake, but also for the sake of taking care of people who are sick with COVID-19," said Dr Chandra.

## SC Reserves Order On Plea Regarding EWS Quota in NEET-PG Admissions

Agenceis

The Supreme Court on Thursday reserved its order on a plea related to the Economically Weaker Section (EWS) quota in connection with the NEET-PG admissions.

A bench of justices DY Chandrachud and AS Bopanna asked the parties to file their written submissions for consideration.

"We have been hearing this matter for two days, we must start counselling in national interest," the bench said.

ernment.

The Centre had told the apex court on Wednesday that it would not accept a position whereby those falling in the OBC or the EWS category, whether before or after the exercise of revisiting the criterion of Rs 8 lakh annual income, are deprived of something that is legitimately due to them.

The NEET-PG candidates, who have challenged a July 29, 2021, notification for the implementation of the OBC and the EWS quotas from the 2021-22 academic



Solicitor General Tushar Mehta told the apex court that he would like to dispel the confusion that there is a change in the rules of the game midway.

"Firstly, there is no change in the rules of the game. The regime which is the subject matter of this challenge is already implemented since 2019 except in the All India Quota," he submitted.

Senior advocates Arvind Datar and Shyam Divan appeared in the court on behalf of some of the candidates.

Senior advocate P Wilson appeared for the Tamil Nadu gov-

ernment, opposed the government's justification of applying the Rs 8 lakh income criterion, saying no study has been conducted on it.

Large-scale protests were held by resident doctors of various hospitals under the banner of the Federation of Resident Doctors' Association (FORDA) in Delhi and other parts of the country over the delay in the NEET-PG counselling, which has been postponed due to the pendency of the case and the Centre deciding to revisit the criterion for the determination of the EWS quota. PTI

## 'Bulli Bai' Case: 21-Year-Old App Creator, The 'Main Conspirator', Arrested

Agenceis

Delhi Police, on Thursday, arrested a second year engineering student from Jorhat in Assam in the 'Bulli Bai' case—the fourth person nabbed for their alleged involvement in the app that has listed hundreds of Muslim women for "auction".

Niraj Bishnoi, 21, is the "main conspirator" in the case, a police official said.

Bishnoi, a resident of Jorhat who studies in Bhopal, is also the creator of the 'Bulli Bai' app on the platform GitHub as well as the main Twitter account holder of 'Bulli Bai', police said. He was arrested by the Intelligence Fusion and Strategic Operations (IFSO) unit of the Delhi Police.

"He was arrested early Thursday morning from Jorhat using technical analysis and IPDR (Internet Protocol Detail Records) and gateways," Deputy Commissioner of Police, IFSO, K.P.S. Malhotra said.

Bishnoi is a second year B.Tech student from the Vellore Institute of Technology in the Madhya Pradesh capital, the DCP said.

This is the fourth arrest in the case. The cyber cell of Mumbai Police, which is also probing the case, has made three arrests—a 19-year-old woman, alleged to



be the main culprit, from Uttarakhand, a 21-year-old engineering student from Bengaluru and another 21-year-old, also from Uttarakhand.

Hundreds of Muslim women were listed for "auction" on the 'Bulli Bai' mobile application with photographs sourced without permission and doctored. The app appeared to be a clone of 'Sulli Deals' which triggered a similar row last year.

On Saturday, Delhi Police registered an FIR against unknown persons for allegedly uploading a doctored picture of a woman journalist on a website. The journalist had lodged a complaint and shared a copy on Twitter.



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